

Seleukid Royal Women

Creation, Representation and Distortion of
Hellenistic Queenship in the Seleukid Empire

Edited by Altay Coşkun and Alex McAuley

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Cover illustration: Jugate Coin of Kleopatra Thea and Alexander Balas.
Tetradrachm, Ake-Ptolemais; 15.53 g. Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 160, lot 287:
Kleopatra Thea & Antiochos Balas. © Dr. Hubert Lanz

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For generations the Seleukid Empire was pushed to the margins of Classical scholarship, thought to be too remote, too diverse, and too detached from the more glamorous traditional centres of the Greco-Roman world to be of any consequence. Even among Hellenistic scholars, the Seleukids stood in the shadows of their more prominent relatives in the Macedonian motherland (the Argeads and Antigonids) and Egypt (the Ptolemies). But as our discipline has shifted its focus to a wider angle, over the past few decades the Seleukids have been buoyed by a wave of interest in the Hellenistic world and its diversity, plurality, and vectors of cultural contact. As fascination with the diversity of the Classical world begins to eclipse the former Eurocentric homogeneity, the Seleukids have become a justifiably desirable object of study among Classicists as well.

The territory controlled by the Greco-Macedonian dynasty was vast: at its height, it spanned some three million square kilometres to encompass modern-day Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Israel, stretching East through the Fertile Crescent into Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the exception of the Achaimenids, in almost no other region or period of the Ancient World was such a vast diversity of peoples, ethnicities, traditions, religions, and languages held under the sway of one family.¹ As the bridge that spanned East and West in the Hellenistic period, and the force through which a much broader Eastern world was brought into contact with the Mediterranean, the Seleukid Empire is now enjoying unprecedented popularity as fertile ground for the analysis of cross-cultural interaction and imperial administration.

While this rebirth of interest in the Seleukid Empire began in sporadic isolation, it has emerged as the primary focus of a growing network of established and up-and-coming scholars throughout Northern America and Europe. A highly productive series of meetings and conferences over the past few years has brought together academics of diverse methods and approaches. First among them is the *Seleukid Dissolution* Conference hosted at the University of Exeter by K. Erickson (now at Trinity St. David, Lampeter, Wales) and G. Ramsey (now at the University of Toronto) in 2008. The edited papers aptly reflect the lucrative potential of a collaborative approach that unites a range of different geographical subspecialisations, language skills, and source types.² Since then, scholars of the Seleukid Empire have been increasingly prominent at broader meetings of Hellenistic historians, most

1 For the growing awareness that the eastern dominions were as important as the Mediterranean ones for at least the earlier Seleukids, see, e.g., Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993; Capdetrey 2007; Engels 2011; Kosmin 2014a; Grainger 2014.

2 Erickson & Ramsey 2011.

notably at the three Edinburgh conferences *Creating a Hellenistic World*, *Hellenistic Court and Society*, and *Persepolis: 40 Years on*.³

A panel at the workshop *Opportunities for Interdisciplinarity in Hellenistic Scholarship*, hosted by the *Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies* in 2010, reunited K. Erickson, D. Engels and A. Coşkun for the first time after the *Seleukid Dissolution* Conference. Over the course of this meeting a collaborative agenda was forged, leading to an attempt to shed more light on the (still formative) period of the Empire under Antiochos I (294/281–261). The idea was to study major synchronous developments such as the Galatian invasions in the West, temple foundations in Babylonian Borsippa and conflicts in the Iranian satrapies, and to integrate them into a complex picture of the construction and development of Seleukid Kingship.

The first results of this project were presented and further contextualized at *Seleukid Study Day I* at the University of Exeter in August 2011, which A. Coşkun co-organized as a visiting fellow together with S. Mitchell. M. D’Agostini, M. Widmer, A. McAuley, and G. Ramsey introduced a new interest in the early royal family and its female members in particular, whereas D. Engels, K. Erickson, and G. Ramsay pointed out the importance of an Eastern focus. A common interest in the ruling practices and policies of the Seleukids, and the mechanisms by which the Macedonian dynasty held sway over the disparate cultures of the empire, began to be realised. A. McAuley then first introduced his ongoing Genealogy website and research project, which has since become the web platform of the research group. These various approaches intersected very productively with the re-appraisal of King Antiochos I. Perhaps most importantly, the event fomented a sense of collegiality and warm collaboration amongst advanced students and established professors alike.⁴

Next, on *Seleukid Study Day II* (Waterloo, November 2011), a more unified research agenda was formulated: the reign of Antiochos II and his offspring was revisited (A. Coşkun, K. Erickson), with a particular focus on the roles of royal women (M. D’Agostini, A. McAuley, G. Ramsey, S. Ager). The presentations were complemented by the input of ‘outside’ panel chairs (R. Faber, H. Beck).⁵

The chronological focus on the mid- and later 3rd century, when the Empire was first shaken by rebellions in the eastern satrapies and then vexed by domestic strife, was further pursued by a panel at the *Celtic Conference in Classics* (Université de Bordeaux, 5–8 September 2012). As *Seleukid Study Day III*, it was broadly devoted to the history from Antiochos II to Seleukos II, and many papers argued to abandon the old paradigm of Seleukid decline and instead focus more on the surprising degree of Seleukid resilience, a topic that was pursued further at *Seleukid Study V* (Université libre de Bruxelles, August 2015: *Rome and the Later Seleukids*).⁶

3 Erskine & Llewellyn-Jones 2011; Erskine et al. ca. 2016; *Persepolis*-Website.

4 See Coşkun 2011b for a report, as well as Erickson 2011, Coşkun 2012a and Engels 2013 for preliminary results. Previous plans for one collaborative monograph have now been developed further into three independent book projects.

5 See Coşkun 2012b for a report.

6 See Coşkun 2012c for a report and Erickson ca. 2016 for the proceedings. And see the report on SSD V (expected to be published on H-Soz-Kult in the fall 2015).

The present volume assembles selected papers from the workshop *Seleukid Royal Women: Roles, Representations, and Expectations*, which comprised the fourth iteration of the *Seleukid Study Day* series. With generous support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC), the University of Waterloo and the John MacNaughton Chair of Classics at McGill University, the event took place in Montreal in February 2013. The topic had been chosen because we had sensed the limitations of our understanding of the stakes held by queens and princesses in the power games of the Hellenistic world. Our principal aim at the conference was to better understand the character of their influence, as well as the effects they had on the creation of a cultural *koine* and, more particularly, in shaping Seleukid royalty.⁷

Eleven of the full chapters included in this volume have been developed from the talks presented at McGill (A.-C. Harders, E. Almagor, G. Ramsey, A. Coşkun, B. Bartlett, S. Ager & C. Hardiman, A. McAuley, R. Wenghofer & D.J. Houle, R. Strootman, J. Wilker, A. Dumitru). The papers by M. D'Agostini on Laodike, Wife of Achaïos the Younger, by F. Muccioli on the queenly virtues as reflected in their divine epithets, and R. Walsh on Galatian royal women have appeared or will appear elsewhere.⁸ K. Erickson's study on the limited visibility of the queens in cultic spheres overlapped significantly with the investigation of S. Ager & C. Hardiman; accordingly we were happy to accept instead a collaborative study on Apama and Stratonike (D. Engels & K. Erickson). In addition, the original introductory remarks have been maintained or even developed further (A. Coşkun, A. McAuley, H. Beck).

Seleukid Royal Women boasts to be the most comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach not only to a subtopic of Seleukid History, but also to female royalty in antiquity, thus elaborating on an important aspect of gender roles in the Classical world. A variety of methodological approaches, such as Classical and Near Eastern Philology, Greek Epigraphy, Numismatics, Art History and Gender Studies have left their imprints on the arguments presented here. How the legacy of these women has been elaborated, embellished, twisted, or perverted to serve a variety of purposes is, to us, equally important as their biographical careers themselves, and thus we feel justified in paying both equal attention.

Seeing this volume coming together, we feel deeply indebted to all of the aforementioned institutions and colleagues for their contributions as co-organizers, participants and/or co-authors that made this project possible. We would like to single out in particular S. Mitchell and H. Beck for their institutional support and ongoing sympathies with our initiative, E.D. Carney for her generous and pertinent feedback to the conference papers, as well as D. Engels and K. Erickson for their enthusiasm and expertise with which they have fostered the collaboration of the Seleukid Study Group since its beginnings. Our gratitude further extends to Chloe Bigio, Katrina van Amsterdam and Emma Bardes for their help with the organization of the conference at McGill University, as well as to Brigitte Schneebeli for her

7 See Coşkun & McAuley 2013 for a report.

8 See Muccioli 2013; D'Agostini 2014; Walsh ca. 2017.

relentless support with the financial management of the project. We would also like to cordially thank Gunnar Dumke, Arthur Houghton and Kyle Erickson for generously supporting us when we were gathering the copyright permissions for the illustrations of this volume. Last but not least we would like to express our gratitude for the swiftness, precision and kindness with which our book was handled by the editor-in-chief of *Historia Einzelschriften*, Kai Brodersen, and the representatives of the Steiner Verlag, Katharina Stüdemann, Sarah Schäfer and Albrecht Franz. To them, along with the contributors to this volume, whom we are privileged to call colleagues, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

October 2015

Altay Coşkun
Waterloo ON

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Montreal & Vancouver

NOBLE WOMEN IN CHINA, ROME, AND IN-BETWEEN – A PROLOGUE

Hans Beck
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In Republican Rome noble women were not supposed to drink alcohol. Romulus himself, so the story went, had issued a piece of legislation that prohibited the consumption of alcohol by women. If a husband found his wife acting in violation of the law, he had the right to kill her. There was of course also a widely acknowledged *exemplum* that lent authenticity to this tradition. A certain Egnatius Maetennus had beaten his wife to death because she was drunk, but due to Romulus' intervention all charges against him were dropped. In the later-3rd century BC, when more reliable information on the earliest pieces of Roman sumptuary legislation is available, women were denied access to the wine cellar. Around the same time, Cato the Elder recorded that male relatives would check on their female family members and see if they had an alcoholic breath. This was the primary reason why men and women exchanged a kiss when greeting each other – or so Cato said.

At around the same time as Rome's sumptuary legislation, some 8,000 km further East, Chinese noble women were not meant to indulge in the pleasures of alcohol either. From the Qin to the early Han period – that is from the late-3rd to 1st centuries BC – many legendary tales of the 'good wife' survive. What derives from these tales is again the axiomatic observation that women were greatly confined by men in their actions. In the *Nü Jie*, or *Lessons for Women*, Ban Zhao writes in c. 100 CE:

Decidedly nothing is better (to gain the heart of a husband) than whole-hearted devotion and correct manners. In accordance with the rites and proper modes of conduct, (let a woman) live a pure life. Let her have ears that hear not licentiousness; and eyes that see not depravity. When she goes outside her own home, let her not be conspicuous in dress and manners. When at home let her not neglect her dress. Women should not assemble in groups, nor gather together (for gossip and silly laughter). They should not stand watching in the gateways. (If a woman follows) these rules, she may be said to have whole-hearted devotion and correct manners.

There is no need here to dwell on how the male desire to wield control over female behavior translates into societal norms in these stories. It is easy to strip these traditions of their gender assumptions and expose their inherently male mindset. By extension, such suspicion about the chauvinistic encodings of our sources applies to the vast majority of what is called the ancient tradition. What is more challenging, and maybe also more interesting from the social historian's perspective today, is the societal discourse that revolved around such traditions. The questions of how the gendered mindset related to societal practice and how it corresponded to what

Michel Foucault has labelled its “regime of truth” leads to the very core of those political cultures of the ancient world.

In Rome’s culture of public display, the gender discourse extended to regulations of the appearance of women in the public sphere. The issue was precarious because it was tied to the volatile equilibrium between the ruling elite and the common people. Just as the male members of the senatorial elite were anxious to follow an implicit protocol in their everyday interactions with ordinary citizens, so the women of this elite were subject to expectations regarding their public behavior. But while male behaviour was governed by good practice, female action was confined by law. The sumptuary laws are a good example. The need for such laws was felt in the late-3rd and then in the 2nd centuries BC, when Rome had begun to conquer the Hellenistic monarchies of the East one by one. According to many contemporary observers in the senate, this conquest caused a rush towards decadence. Women were perceived as particularly prone to showing off with their luxury items; hence the stipulation of a series of laws that limited the ostentatious display of wealth in the public sphere.

Modern scholarship on women in antiquity has had its difficulties with looking behind the façade of stereotyped accounts of the sources. Textbooks on ancient Rome, for instance, usually highlight the image of the role model *matrona* and her confinement to the domestic space. Consequently, it has become axiomatic to think of late-Republican aristocratic women as masters, or mistresses, of the confined household. When they crossed into the public sphere, where the eye of the masculine tradition captured them, they are often portrayed in the sources as opportunistic, if not ruthless, individuals who navigate around the affairs of men, outsmarting the restrictions that were imposed on them. Subsequent wrongdoing – anything from sexual transgression to the evil plotting of their husband’s murder – implicitly justifies the original confinement. Tacitus bears witness to many literary *topoi* of this pattern.

In light of the restricted body of sources at hand, it is challenging to project a picture that is immune to the shortcomings of stereotyping. One of the few breakthrough moments in scholarship was the publication of Ann-Cathrin’s Harders’ book *Suavissima Soror* (2008). Based on anthropological family models, Harders argues that Roman aristocratic families were not just vertically layered units that were governed by the authority of age. Instead, in her analysis she fleshes out the horizontal intersection among families, and she demonstrates how the idea of horizontal interconnectivity became a defining moment in the constitution of a noble family. It has often been argued that the families of the Roman nobility entertained all sorts of marriage alliances to maintain their social status and enhance their prestige. But in Harders’ account, the utilitarian advantage a marriage strategy secures in any given moment is complemented by a much more permanent force of familial relations. The horizontal bond between families is established, however, not by men, but women, who were true agents in shaping families – i. e., and not just passive tokens or trophies in the exchange between men.

In one of his recent books, *The Early Chinese Empires. Qin and Han* (2007), Mark Edward Lewis characterizes the role of women as inferiors and outsiders,

“necessary for reproduction but otherwise aliens within the husband’s family” (156). Lewis refers to the *Record on Ritual*, or *Li ji*, published with commentaries and annotations between the 4th and 1st centuries BC. The *Li ji* advocated three forms of obedience for a woman, that is: a woman first had to obey her father, then her husband, and, when widowed, her son. So just like at Rome, the male discourse in imperial China placed women under the control of multiple layers of patriarchy, with reserved spheres of action and governed forms of behavior. But unlike their Roman counterparts, Chinese women actually commanded their sons, as the authority of age trumped the authority of gender; filial piety to both parents was a son’s highest obligation. In this sense, then, we find a similar tension between male moralizing tales and normative traditions on the one hand, and the actual role of women in society on the other. It is difficult to disentangle these strands because so little survives, and whatever is available falls in the category of gender normativity as construed by men. But interestingly enough, Lewis acknowledges this gap between a woman’s place in text and everyday life, and, in passing, he entertains the role of women in the process of securing political alliances and accumulating family fortunes. The look behind the brick wall of masculine source narratives and their stereotyped extension into scholarship promises to offer an all-new understanding of women in ancient China.

Chinese and Roman women had no knowledge of each other, just as their civilizations were worlds apart from one another. Their mutual awareness was fuzzy at all times. While the Han Chinese sources refer to Rome as the realm of the Da Qin – some sort of ‘Counter China’ at the other end of the world – Roman sources speak of trade relations with the *Seres* people who, according to Pliny the Elder, were “famous for the woolen substance obtained from their forests”. The exciting thing about this substance was that it allowed the *matrona*, according to Pliny, “to flaunt transparent clothing in public”. The cultural advancement of silk production is measured here against the excitement this sparked in the eyes of the male observer. At the same time, the moralistic tenor of the passage is unmistakable. As so often, then, the assessment in the source is inspired by the idea of male authority over the female body in the public sphere.

The political cultures of the two Eurasian flanks were unrelated, but at different times different intermediate empires fed into the realms of both Rome and China. The largest power to do so was the Seleukid Empire, spanning at its peak from the coast of Asia Minor into Baktria or, in the words of Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis* (1993). The Seleukids clawed the greatest part of the Persian Royal Road System, which would become the future Silk Road. This alone made them cultural intermediaries of an unprecedented magnitude. At the same time, their realm was a huge cultural tapestry in itself, embracing a very high volume of diverse local political and social organizations, regional ethnicities, economic circumstances, and religious traditions.

The study of this patchwork empire has regained significant momentum in recent years, thanks also to the inspiring work carried out by the Seleukid Study Days (SSD) and their associated group of researchers. The present volume adds to this inspiration. It offers a unique attempt to delve into the political culture of the

Seleukids. Maybe more than the women of any other royal era in antiquity, the noble women of the Seleukid Empire are almost entirely subject to the drawback of masculine source narratives and their thoughtless repetition in scholarship. As the editors discuss in their introduction, for the longest time the best that researchers could say about Seleukid women would be summarized in one way or another under the labels of romance, affectionate love, or sexual ecstasy, spiced up with scenes of cruelty and, to be sure, a heavy dose of 'orientalism'. The subsequent contributions to this book refer to these gendered stereotypes throughout, yet more importantly, they disclose the multiple ways and means in which they can be overcome. By making women the lead actors of the script, the authors unearth a layer of the historical narrative that has been buried underneath male perspectives and understandings. In this vein of inquiry, the advanced approach in gender studies allows them not only to research the noble women of the Seleukids in their own right, but also present exciting new discoveries in the fields of, for instance, alliance building, cultural transfer, and the integration of ethnic groups from a perceived periphery. The gap between Rome and China is closing once again.

THE STUDY OF SELEUKID ROYAL WOMEN: AN INTRODUCTION

*Altay Coşkun, University of Waterloo &
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Over the past two and a half decades, the study of royal women has been one of the most dynamic fields of inquiry into the Hellenistic era, and one that has profoundly shifted our perceptions of gender, status, influence, and ability within the broader ancient world. Royal women in general were once dismissed as powerless pawns in a political game that was an exclusively masculine domain,¹ but thanks to the efforts of S. Pomeroy, E. D. Carney, and a great many others the trend has turned towards recognising that such women also had their own roles to play, both active and passive. This body of research has tended to focus primarily on Macedonian and Ptolemaic women, giving rise to an analytical construct in which the fiery involvement of Adea-Eurydike and Olympias set an enduring precedent for the later influence of the Ptolemaic Kleopatras on their dynasty and beyond.² But in the eyes of contemporary commentators Ptolemaic women were equally empowered by their kingdom's unique Pharaonic ideology mixed with their own clever resourcefulness.

Seleukid women, much like their dynasty itself, have all too often been marginalised as a result of the scarcity of our sources or the vagaries of scholarly preference. In fact, they have an unhappy or sinister place in contemporary historiography. To the earliest modern historians of the Hellenistic world, Seleukid women fell into one of two camps: they were either consigned to humble obscurity and existed as passive scions of their family's prestige, or, when they took matters into their own hands, they preyed on the interest and affection of their male counterparts in the ruthless pursuit of their own agenda.³ To E. R. Bevan in particular, as the dynasty's path brought it into ever closer relation with the Ptolemies and women from both dynasties crossed into either, "destiny was introducing the Erinyes of the house of Seleucus".⁴ Elsewhere, he sums up the old *opinio communis* with almost priestly conviction as he writes of late Seleukid women that "it was in the political sphere,

1 See, e.g., Bevan 1902; Bouché-Leclercq 1913/14; Bickerman 1938.

2 Carney 1991; 1995; 2006; 2011; cf. also Pomeroy 1990; Whitehorne 2001; Ogden 1999; Lightman 2000; Bielman Sánchez 2000; 2003; Nourse 2002; O'Neil 2002; Savalli-Lestrade 2003b; Müller 2011; 2013a; 2013b; Ramsey 2011; Harders 2013; 2014. For an important study on Laodike I, see Martínez-Sève 2002/3.

3 Bevan 1902, 2.16–53 for examples of such analysis, as well as 2.555–70. Bickerman 1938, 27 is particularly dismissive of Seleukid women when he writes 'la reine séleucide n'apparaît jamais sur la scène politique comme les épouses des Lagides'.

4 Bevan 1902, 2.212.

rather than just that of sensual indulgence, that their passions lay and their crimes found a motive".⁵

The tide turned somewhat, but not entirely with G. H. Macurdy's 1932 study of Hellenistic Queens. Ahead of her time she certainly was, and an invaluable precursor to more recent treatments to be sure, but as she approached Seleukid women with an eye to their empowerment and influence she oddly agrees with some of her predecessor's more dismissive conclusions. Even in this period which she describes as "the era of super women", she nevertheless concludes that in Macedon and in the Seleukid realm royal women seldom exercised any real power.⁶ Such a minimalist view proceeds naturally from her criteria, as she was neither the first nor the last to gauge the power of royal women by comparing them exclusively to their male counterparts. In such a construct, female influence will always pale. But on the moral plane, Macurdy – perhaps rightly – put forward the apology that we need not expect royal women to have been of higher moral standards than their kings.⁷

In the near century of scholarship that has followed, when compared to their contemporaries in Macedon and Egypt, Seleukid queens and princesses had hardly begun to fall under the gaze of scholarly scrutiny. This was generally the case, at least, prior to the workshop *Seleukid Royal Women*. This scholarly neglect should not be taken as indicative of their import. From the late 4th to the early 1st centuries BC, these women were born or married into the family at the head of an empire that spanned dozens of cultures, languages, and traditions encompassing territory that spanned from western Asia Minor to the Indus River. Imbued with an ideological prominence, they became scions of their family's legitimacy and prestige. But under certain circumstances, they could become bearers of political power in their own right: as advisers to their royal husbands, as representatives of their birth houses, or as mediators between subjects and king. Effective monarchical rule was nevertheless limited: for the most part, this had to wait to the times after their husband's death and lasted only as long as they managed to control a co-ruling son. They seldom ruled in precisely the same manner as their husbands or sons, but this does not mean that they were never in power.

Yet at the same time the symbolic meaning represented by Seleukid royal women or the political power wielded by some of them cannot be studied in isolation. To garner a deeper understanding, among other things, a systematic investigation into ancient narratives of powerful royal women is required. Those about whom we learn in the literary tradition were spectacular characters, starting, in fact, not with Apama (who only received passing remarks in historiography), but with the – at least in the Graeco-Macedonian perspective – much more prominent daughter of King Demetrios Poliorketes, Stratonike. However, her renown was mainly based on the extraordinary fact that her first husband Seleukos I decided to pass her on to his son Antiochos in 294 BC. At any rate, for the most part, Seleukid queens figuring prominently in Classical literature were 'evil queens', anti-models for a

5 Bevan 1902, 2.280.

6 Macurdy 1932, i for the minimalist view of female influence. The derivative, contingent power of women is best captured in her account the reign of Laodike III at pp. 91–2.

7 Macurdy 1932, esp. 1–12.

‘good’ royal wife, if not for any ‘decent’ woman who lived up to the moral expectations of their contemporaries. Prominence and ‘bad press’ mostly went hand-in-hand in a society that valued invisibility of women in the public sphere. Within the Greek historiographical tradition at least, the ‘good queen’ tends to remain a shady figure, only to be mentioned in the context of her royal wedding or as the mother of legitimate offspring to the king.

The papers assembled in this volume try to balance the various factors that have yielded the diverse images of Seleukid royal women which we can glimpse in our literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence. They do so in full awareness of the construed nature of such representations, and try to bring to light the structures under which those royal personae were educated, represented, honoured and remembered. The four papers on Apama and Stratonike, especially the one by A.-C. Harders, draw the readers’ attention to the sheer novelty of the *basilissa* as a figure. Not only had her symbolic value and particular agency yet to be defined, but the same is likewise true for the creation of the Hellenistic *basileus*. These new types of monarchs, in turn, were Macedonian warriors of non-royal descent who ended up as rulers of vast territories most of which extended far beyond the Graeco-Macedonian world. Readers should be alerted to the fact that not every wife of a king bore the title of *basilissa*, hence the predilection for terms such as ‘royal wives’, ‘consorts’, ‘mothers’ or ‘daughters’ throughout this volume. We have, however, abstained from imposing strict terminological consistency and do occasionally allow royal women to be called ‘queens’ even without positive evidence for the title, when there is still reason to assume that they may have been *basilissai* at least at some point of their lives, or that they managed to establish effective monarchical rule.⁸

At any rate, Harder’s chapter neatly serves as an introduction to Hellenistic queenship as such, and thus allows this introduction to be short. While her focus is particularly on the communication between the king and his new subjects, G. Ramsey concentrates on the queen’s diplomatic functions, which are also addressed by D. Engels & K. Erickson (as well as further down by A. McAuley for Apama of Kyrene). How multi-layered the representations of Apama and Stratonike are has further been demonstrated by E. Almagor: he screened the romantic story of Stratonike’s remarriage to Antiochos I against the background of Achaimenid succession rituals, near-Eastern folklore and Greek philosophical teachings. Engels & Erickson complemented this endeavour by explaining elements of the narratives within the broad context of Persian legends surrounding the royal court. These literary studies teach us a lot about the ancients’ imaginations of court life, and still something about possible patterns of interactions between the king, his wife and other members of the royal family or the court. At the same time, they caution us to take even the very few biographical details about the first two Seleukid queens that have come down to us as historically reliable facts.

8 On this problem, see also the chapter by Coşkun, in this volume, with n. 44 for further discussion.

The notion of literary constructs also underlies subsequent chapters. A. Coşkun tries to disentangle the traditions that blackened the reputation of Laodike I, wife of Antiochos II: the unique survival of documentary evidence has allowed him to check the literary tradition against contemporary voices. While the importance of polygamy at Hellenistic royal courts had been noted also in the preceding chapters on the first Seleukid queens, its potentially pernicious results at the political and military levels has never seemed so manifest as after Antiochos II's second marriage with Berenike, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphos. This said, Coşkun argues that the polygamous situation was less dramatic for the affected wives, who had grown up in polygamous environments; this condition rather impressed Greek and Roman historiographers, for whom monogamy was the norm. Given their general disdain for the mixing of females and politics, they were thus twice at unease, as Carney pointed out long before.⁹ In addition, Ptolemaic court propaganda and pro-Ptolemaic sentiments especially in the work of Phylarchos caused further harm to the recollection of Seleukid rule in general and to the reputation of Laodike in particular.¹⁰

A much better idea of how the Seleukid court wanted its female members to be viewed by the subjects could be gained from their visual representations – unless this path of research were impaired by the scarceness of the remaining evidence: only few queens, starting with Laodike IV, ever appeared depicted on coins, and no surviving sculpture can safely be attributed to any Seleukid *basilissa*. That such did exist though is sufficiently implied by the references to divine cults for Seleukid royal women. Based on a complete collection of the evidence for the first one-and-a-half centuries of Seleukid rule, S. Ager and C. Hardiman systematically explore the implications of our evidence, or the lack thereof. They cautiously ponder personal predilections of the royal husbands, effective influence displayed by certain queens, and a growing influence of Ptolemaic traditions since the days of Antiochos III.

Not included in this volume are the workshop contributions by M. D'Agostini and R. Walsh, both of which dealt with highly positive depictions of royal wives, and this in somewhat surprising contexts. The former discussed Polybios' representation of Laodike, the wife of the usurper Achaios the Younger, the latter three virtuous wives of Galatian kings, Chiomara, Kamma and Stratonike. At a first glance, one might think of 'inversions of the inversion' in all of these cases: while the good queen at a Graeco-Macedonian court was expected to keep a low profile to avoid her hostile representation as transgressor of gender roles, the wife of a usurper or barbarian king might in turn appear in a more positive light, if only as a contrast foil to her negative male counterpart. But upon closer inspection, all four royal consorts have in common that their bold actions were inspired by loyalty to their husbands: when those had failed to protect their rules, lives or wives, the latter were apparently permitted to take action either to defend or avenge their consorts

9 Carney 1992, 188–9, quoted by Coşkun, in this volume, n. 110.

10 See also Primo 2009.

and thus display the virtue of *philandria*.¹¹ After all, these are exceptions that ultimately confirm the paradigm.

B. Bartlett has dedicated a case study to Kleopatra Tryphaina, wife of Antiochos Grypos, while A. McAuley has scrutinized the biography of Apama, daughter of Antiochos I and wife of Magas of Kyrene. Our knowledge of these two royal wives has so far entirely depended on the highly distorting accounts of the moralizing Roman epitomizer Justin. Bartlett carefully deconstructs the composition by a subtle literary analysis, McAuley questions the dramatic plot by recontextualizing the family scandal of the Kyrenean rulers within its political environment: this was defined by social pressure groups in the Pentapolis and diplomatic loyalties or tensions among the dynastic houses of the time.

McAuley's is the first paper to focus on Seleukid women married into outside dynasties. It is followed by an investigation of genealogical links first with the Diodotids of Baktria and Sandrokottos of India, and second with the Orontids of Kommagene (also including probably fictitious links with the Achaimenids). Beyond detecting hitherto overlooked intermarriage connections (or at least the claims thereof), R. Wenghofer & D. J. Houle and R. Strootman respectively scrutinize the political contexts of those marriages as well as their symbolic meaning among future generations. J. Wilker's study on the Hasmoneans has been included partly for comparative purposes, partly also with a view to the influence that Seleukid court propaganda wielded on the emerging dynasties on the margins of its empire, even if religious conditions forbade the Jewish family to establish marital links with the former superpower. However, ancient sources tell us very little about Hasmonaean royal women, which demonstrates that the court of Judaea was much more effective in keeping their females 'invisible' than the later Seleukids. At the same time, Wilker is able to specify incidents which allowed the consorts of the Hasmoneans to become kingmakers or once even a ruling queen.

The last chapter by A. Dumitru rehearses the crucial stages in the life of the latest Seleukid queen we know of, Kleopatra Selene. Married to no less than two kings of Egypt and three of Syria, she left all her competitors from the Houses of the Ptolemies and Seleukids behind, at least in numerical terms. When it comes to active political choices, she has so far stood in the long shadow of her infamous predecessor Kleopatra Thea, but Dumitru has been able to point to several instances where we should reconsider the impact of her queenly agency.

On balance, the studies assembled in this volume make clear cases that the investigation of queenly role models and biographies need to be studied on the basis of all kinds of available primary sources as well as against a broad social, political and cultural context. Actions attested for individual royal wives, widows and daughters cannot simply be taken at face value, but need to be reviewed behind the background of the experimental design of the new roles of the Hellenistic *basileus* and *basilissa* in the age of the Diadochs, understood within the dynamic interplay of inter-dynastic loyalties or tensions, as well as contextualized before the ethic

11 See Coşkun and McAuley 2013 for abstracts and D'Agostini 2014 (on Polyb. 8.15.1–21.11) and Walsh ca. 2017 (on Plut. *Mor.* 257e–258a) for the papers.

horizon of Greek moralizing historiography and Near Eastern folkloric narrative traditions. Both of the latter were as much catering a sensationalist audience as they were trying to convey moral role- and anti-role-models, not only for royal wives, but for all 'decent' women in Near Eastern, Hellenistic and finally Roman societies. Drastic illustrations of the pernicious outcomes of transgressing established gender norms formed part of the historiographic and anecdotal repertoire of our ancient authors.

Last but not least, many of the studies presented here sufficiently document that modern audiences – 'critical' as they consider themselves to be – have too often been inclined to accept accounts that have heavily been distorted by gender-stereotypes, and occasionally even added to the ill reputation of Hellenistic 'queens'.

I. EXPERIMENTING WITH THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL
CONSORT: THE FIRST TWO *BASILISSAI* OF THE SELEUKIDS

THE MAKING OF A QUEEN – SELEUKOS NIKATOR AND HIS WIVES

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ABSTRACT

A king does not need a queen to rule successfully; yet after the death of Alexander not only did a new type of king emerge, the Hellenistic *basileus*, but also at the same time the Hellenistic *basilissa*. The manner in which Seleukos Nikator presented his two wives Apama and Stratonike as queens at his side, the way they were perceived by his subjects, and how they represented themselves are treated in this paper. By analyzing the constellation of king and queen as part of the representation of the ruler, the difficulties as well as the new possibilities for the legitimization of monocratic rule after Alexander are highlighted.

I. “AT HIS SIDE” – KINGS AND QUEENS

When thinking of kings and queens, we imagine modern fairy tale weddings, beautiful couples waving to their subjects and chubby-faced babies with their proud royal parents. Yet in order to illustrate the structural possibilities that are inherent in the constellation of king and queen, and to ask what exactly it may do for a ruler to have a woman at his side, let us turn to a dynasty that usually stands in the shadow of its more glamorous European counterparts: the Kim dynasty of North Korea. On December 29th, 2011, Kim Jong Un stepped into the position previously held by his father Kim Jong Il and his grandfather Kim Il Sung before him, and was announced as the “Great Successor”. Information from the last Stalinist state is notoriously sparse, and precious little about the new “Dear Leader”, his life and his character is known. Every one of his appearances, speeches, and moves was therefore discussed and analyzed by curious outside spectators in order to assess his political agenda.

In July 2012, Kim Jong Un did something completely new and unexpected: he stepped out into the public eye with a female companion. The rest of the world was puzzled and speculated about the identity of the mysterious lady. It was argued that she might be a lover scorned by his late father who was finally presented to the public; this seemingly private matter of a newly unrestricted love life for the ‘Dear Leader’ was interpreted as a sign of political change. To understand the confusion caused by a young woman, one has to look back at the self-representation of North

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Korean rulers. The last public appearance of a woman of the Kim dynasty dates to the 1970s, and thereafter the ruler was a 'king' who was markedly without a queen. The ruler cult surrounding the Kims focused on the current ruler and – at one point – his successor, and though Kim Jong Il was married four times, none of his wives were ever seen in public. When Ri Sol Ju was announced as Kim Jong Un's wife on July 25th, 2012, this unsurprisingly caused a political sensation.¹ Pictures were broadcast that showed the young couple laughing, listening to musical performances and visiting a kindergarten in Pyongyang. These rare appearances were interpreted as a way to demonstrate to the North Korean people and to the world that Kim Jong Un was no longer just a child and an heir, but a man, a husband and – given the rumors of a pregnancy and birth of a daughter² – a father. Through the young wife, dubbed by English media as "the Communist Kate Middleton",³ the "Dear Ruler" presented himself as rather modern, and, unlike his father, affable. The ruler's wife changed the perception of the ruler – and therefore of his rule. The wife alone, however, does not define the ruler. Ri Sol Ju has disappeared from the public eye again and Kim Jong Un's *persona* has most recently been defined by nuclear threats, sham trials and cyber-attacks that align more neatly with the tradition of his predecessors.

How does the modern example of North Korea help us understand ancient rulership better – and how does this relate specifically to Seleukos Nikator and his wives? The episode points out certain interesting aspects when it comes to considering ancient rulers and their affiliated female counterparts. This paper will discuss aspects of Seleukos' dynastic politics in order to answer the question of how to make a queen in the Hellenistic world.

First of all, a ruler does not need a woman at his side in order to rule successfully; kingship does not necessarily rely on the presence of a queen. Even when it comes to the question of succession, the position of a queen is not necessary in order to secure the dynasty as she might not be the mother of the future ruler, and different mechanisms for organizing succession – e. g., by adoption or by election – have to be kept in mind.

Secondly, the woman next to the ruler, even if she is heralded and addressed as queen, does not automatically wield power or influence due to this position. Accordingly I will not focus on the character of this type of power.⁴ The political

1 Cf. Choe Sang-hun: "That Mystery Woman in North Korea? Turns out She's the First Lady", The New York Times, 25.7.2012 (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/world/asia/north-korean-leader-marries-reports-say.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 [last access: 12.11.2013]).

2 P. Boehler: "Another Lil' Kim? Wife of North Korea's Kim Jong Un Appears 'Heavily Pregnant'", TIME.com, 17.12.2012 (<http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/12/17/another-lil-kim-wife-of-north-koreas-kim-jong-un-appears-heavily-pregnant/#ixzz2nVGyFkD> [last access 12/11/2013]). The birth of a daughter named Kim Ju-ae was confirmed by former NBA player Dennis Rodman (cf. "Dennis Rodman lets the world know Kim Jong Un has a daughter"; The National Post, 19.3.2013; <http://sports.nationalpost.com/2013/03/19/dennis-rodman-seems-to-let-it-slip-that-kim-jong-un-has-a-daughter/> [last access 13.12.2013]).

3 "Ri Sol-ju: pass notes No 3,273", The Guardian, 30.10.2012 (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/30/ri-sol-ju-pass-notes> [last access 13.12.2013]).

4 Cf. Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 64f., who describes the *basilissa's* agency as a "pouvoir d'influ-

possibilities of a woman who is close to the ruler do not necessarily depend on her position and the title of a queen. To come back to the introductory example: we do not know whether Ri Sol Ju has any say in the political matters of her husband. What has been suggested, though, is that the younger sister of the ‘Dear Leader’, Kim Yo Jong, has to be reckoned with as the force behind the scene.⁵

By looking at the queen, I will really be looking at the figure of the king and asking what does it do to a king’s *persona*, and how does it change the foundations of his rule, when he has a queen at his side? Examining the constellation of king and queen might be illustrative in order to better understand Hellenistic kingship, and the age of the Diadochs is rather striking in this respect since we can analyze kingship *in statu nascendi* as Alexander’s generals fought for this new kind of rule and had not yet fully come into their royal roles. In the emerging kingdoms, the new kings as well as their entourages and subjects also experimented with and established the new form of the *basilissa*. As I will argue, this intentional maneuver of the new kings of representing themselves via a queen who served as a gatekeeper to the king on the one hand proved to be very successful and was accepted by their subjects. On the other hand, however, they also ran some risks in elevating the woman at one’s side as part of the royal *persona* because the queen did not always necessarily act on behalf of the king and his interests. The manner in which Seleukos Nikator treated and presented his wives, the Sogdian Apama and the Macedonian Stratonike, the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes, will testify to both aspects. Yet before turning to Seleukos, some short remarks on kingship after Alexander and the emergence of the *basilissa* are in order to set the scene in its specifically Seleukid context.

II. RULING AFTER ALEXANDER – THE EMERGENCE OF KINGS AND QUEENS

When Alexander the Great died in Babylon in June 323 BC, his succession was far from settled. His generals finally agreed on a dynastic solution with both his half-brother and his then-unborn son as kings, but it seemed only a matter of time until the last Argeads’ rule would be put into question as both Philip Arrhidaios and Alexander IV were not able to act as sovereigns due to their mental disposition and age, respectively.⁶ So the question of who would step into the role vacated by Alexander in turn bounced back to his *philoí*. Even though Argead women, such as

ence dans le domaine du politique”. On the political activities of Apama and Stratonike, see the paper by Ramsey in this volume.

5 Cf. Kang Mi Jin: “Will Kim Jong-un’s Sister Become North Korea’s Most Powerful Woman?”, *The Guardian*, 1.5.2014 (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/01/kim-jong-un-younger-sister-north-korea-most-powerful-woman> [last access 14.2.2015]).

6 On the situation in Babylon, s. Meeus 2008. In the context of the murder of Alexander IV, his half-brother Herakles born by Barsine was murdered as well after he had been brought up as a possible contender by Polyperchon (Diod. 20.28.3; Just. 15.2). On Philip III and Alexander IV, see Heckel 2006, 18 f.; 52 f.

Alexander's mother Olympias and sister Kleopatra, as well as his niece Adea-Eurydike, were able to briefly play an important role in the 'Game of Thrones' after Alexander's death, they were not able to transform the dynastic prestige of the Argead dynasty into a stable and independent position of power within Alexander's realm.⁷ It also became clear that the ambitions of Alexander's generals were not curbed by their lack of dynastic prestige. To compound the issue, they would not rule like the Argeads had over Macedon alone, but over an empire that had only very recently been conquered and was in every possible way – geographically, politically, culturally – an inconsistent and heterogeneous formation. In this mixture of innovation and tradition, a new type of ruler emerged: the Hellenistic *basileus*.

Antigonos Monophthalmos was the first to be acclaimed king in 307/6 BC, and the first to take the diadem as the new symbol of his royal dignity. He then sent messengers to his son Demetrios, proclaiming him *basileus* as well and also sending him a diadem. After that, the surviving Diadochs followed suit: Ptolemy, Lysimachos, Seleukos, and Kassandros took on the title as well, though the exact dates of their acclamations are not known.⁸ These new forms of kingship, emerging between 306 to 302 BC, were of a specific character: though the Diadochs politely respected each other as kings, this did not mean that the new rulers accepted territorial borders or gave up their claim to Alexander's empire as a whole. This *basileia* did not correspond to any clear-cut political or territorial realm, although in short order the Diadochs' respective rules were centered in certain regions. Their reigns extended as far as their spears could conquer – and this meant ever-shifting spheres of power and domination. The legitimacy of the new powers was precarious, as only Kassandros could claim a link with the Argeads through his marriage with Philip's daughter Thessalonike.⁹ Although his rivals also tried to propagate special ties to Alexander and the Argead dynasty, e.g., by rather inventive genealogies,¹⁰ the Diadochs could not ground their rule solely on acclamation and traditional dynastic elements; they had to prove again and again their ability to rule, conquer and defend in order to gain acceptance and recognition of their kingship.

7 See Carney 1991, 154; Carney 1994b, 358–60; Carney 2006, 60–88; Jacquemin 2007, 282–7; Carney 2011, 200f. The Diadochs' wooing of Kleopatra is instructive in this regard: Although she was highly attractive as Alexander III's sister and Philipp II's daughter, she remained unmarried before being killed. The Diadochs eventually did not need the Argead link to foster their claims to power. On Kleopatra, see Meeus 2009a. On the female Argeads' prestige, see Müller 2011 and 2013a.

8 On the assumption of the title *basileus* and the diadem: Plut. *Demetr.* 17.2–18.1; Diod. 20.53.2–3; *FGrH* 523 Zenon of Rhodes = P.Köln VI no. 247; *FGrH* 155 (Heidelberger Epitome) F 1.7. See Haake 2012, 299–302; it is debated whether Kassandros accepted the diadem (see Haake 2012, 301 n. 70).

9 On Kassandros' marriage to Thessalonike, see Diod. 19.51.6; Just. 14.6.13; *FGrH* 155 (Heidelberger Epitome) F 2.4; see Landucci Gattinoni 2009.

10 On the Diadochs' treatment of Alexander, s. Meeus 2009b. Ptolemy claimed to be an illegitimate son of Philip II (Paus. 1.6.2; Curt. 9.8.22); Seleukos claimed Apollo for his father and thereby echoed the myth that Olympias had been visited by Zeus in form of a snake (Just. 12.6 vs. 15.4); see also Engels & Erickson in this volume.

Hans-Joachim Gehrke has shown that the rule of these new kings cannot be described in legalistic-constitutional terms. Following Max Weber's definition of power and his ideal types of legitimation thereof, Gehrke switched the perspective from the ruler to the subjects and analyzed patterns of seeking legitimacy. He describes Hellenistic *basileia* in Weberian terms as charismatic rule: the Diadochs and their successors were continuously forced to prove their worth as "victorious kings" in order to gain acceptance from their subjects and thus legitimacy for their rule.¹¹ The first decades after Alexander's death in particular can be seen as a phase of experimentation: next to military victory, ostentatious splendor and largesse as a benefactor to cities and other communities proved to be valuable assets in generating acceptance for the new royal positions. This was much needed in the Greek world, which – unlike Egypt and the Near East – traditionally did not cope well with monarchies.¹² As I shall argue on the following pages, the establishment of the role of *basilissa* should be understood within this larger development. Indeed, dynasties were created rather early and, following the Diadochs, their successors had a claim to power that was based initially on their dynastic prestige; nonetheless, the charismatic aspect that legitimized the Diadochs' rule was never completely overcome by more traditional aspects (to further use Weberian terms). Thus every king was a king on probation, so to speak, whose reign could easily be contested by more able candidates. Hellenistic kingship, understood in this way, was not a certain or inflexible concept, but rather was quite precarious, and responsive to different needs at different times.

The *basileis* had to cope with the diverse expectations of their various subjects and struggle for their acceptance – often through trial-and-error, particularly in the early decades of the period.¹³ They likewise had to fight off their rivals and former comrades; maintaining the position of king was no easy endeavor. Alliances were made and broken in turn, and in this game of power women became an important vehicle for the establishment and perpetuation of diplomatic alliances. This role can be clearly seen even before the 'long year of the kings' in the three daughters of the *prostates* Antipatros: his eldest Phila was first married off to Krateros and then after his death in 321 BC to the much younger Demetrios as his father Antigonos Monophthalmos sought an alliance with Antipatros. Perdikkas was wooed by Alexander's sister Kleopatra, but decided to marry Antipatros' second daughter Nikaia instead – a clear sign as to which alliance he deemed more prestigious and powerful. After his death, Nikaia in turn married Lysimachos. The youngest

11 Gehrke 1982 = Gehrke 2013 referring to the definition of Hellenistic *basileia* in the Suda (s. v. *basileia*); see also Gehrke 2008, 170 ff. and Gotter 2008, 176 ff.

12 See Gotter 2008, 185–6 and Luraghi 2013, 11–22 on the interplay between kings and *poleis* and the general antimonarchical ideology of the Greek *poleis*.

13 See Ma 2003, who emphasizes the communicative efforts of the kings to interact and negotiate with their various subjects: "seen at this level, the Hellenistic kings exist merely as a bundle of local commitments, a series of roles assigned by the subjects, an endless and ubiquitous process of exchange and negotiation to achieve acceptance by different constituencies." (183).

Eurydike was finally married to Ptolemy – which made Antipatros father-in-law to every relevant power player after Alexander's death.¹⁴

But as mentioned above, simply being married to a king did not readily equate to being queen, as demonstrated by the marriages of the very first successor king. As Antigonos Monophthalmos assumed the title and dignity of a *basileus*, he did not at the same time establish his wife Stratonike as a *basilissa* at his side. His son Demetrios, on the other hand, practiced polygamy and would marry five times, but only in the case of his first wife Phila, the daughter of Antipatros, is there clear evidence that she bore the title *basilissa*: in a Samian honorary decree (ca. 306), the Lykian Demarchos is mentioned as head of the guard of the *basilissa* Phila.¹⁵ According to this decree, Phila was not only distinguished by her own guard, but also by a special title that is not attested for any other wife of Demetrios. The title *basilissa* was an innovation without precedent in the Macedonian kingdom.¹⁶ Yet neither the context nor the agency behind Phila's elevation to queen are known to any degree. This gives room for speculation about whether Demetrios and Antigonos thereby aimed to stress their Antipatrid relation, or if someone else close to Phila propagated her new dignity and Demetrios only afterwards accepted this new title which was associated with his own *basileia*. In the same period Phila was associated with Aphrodite in Athens and received cultic honors in Lampsakos;¹⁷ this demonstrates that, in a period when ruler cult was becoming established, this cultic mode of interaction between *polis* and ruler was also extended to the wife (and later potentially also to a daughter) of the king.

Phila might have been the first royal woman to be addressed as *basilissa* due to her ancestry and personal charisma, but she was not the last:¹⁸ the other Diadochs as well as the Greek *poleis* quickly recognized the potential that was inherent to the position of *basilissa* to (re)configure royal rule and communicate with the king. Consequently, some other wives of kings who were less prominent than Phila were also addressed as *basilissa*: the second royal woman to carry the title was Apama, the first wife of Seleukos Nikator. Nonetheless, strict patterns or conventions regarding how to fill this position, or the precise protocol regarding how to interact with a queen, had not yet solidified. The position of *basilissa* rather opened up a range of possibilities to the king and his subjects, as we shall see in the following early Seleukid examples.

14 On the ever changing political alliances made through marriages, see still Seibert 1967; on Antipatros' daughters see *ibid.*, 11–19.

15 *IG XII 6.1.30*. See also *IEphesos* 2003, an honorary decree for a certain Melesippos who was in company of the *basilissa* Phila. On Demetrios's polygamy, see Harders 2013 (on Phila 46 f.); on Phila, see Wehrli 1964; Nourse 2002, 191–207; on the identity of Demarchos, see Billows 1990, 379, no. 28.

16 On the title *basilissa*, see Carney 1991.

17 *Ath.* 6.254a; see also *Ath.* 6.255c. Cf. Carney 2000, 31–2 on Phila and 36–40 on the association of royal women with Aphrodite in particular.

18 See *Diod.* 19.59.5 and *Plut. Demetr.* 14.1 on Phila's character. After her death in 287, it seems that no other wife of Demetrios was given that title and lifted into her position before Demetrios was captured by Seleukos in 286.

III. SELEUKOS AND HIS SOGDIAN WIFE APAMA

Not much is known about Apama: she was the daughter of the Sogdian Spitamenes who played a major part in the Sogdian resistance against Alexander by occupying the region's capital, Marakanda. Although Spitamenes finally lost support and his severed head was presented to Alexander, his daughter was one of the Iranian brides at the mass wedding at Susa in 324, and Alexander instigated her marriage to Seleukos.¹⁹ Her rare name has prompted scholarly consideration of whether this might be a hint that she could claim relation to the Achaimenids on her mother's side – an issue that has been a subject of debate since W. W. Tarn.

This royal pedigree has often been taken for granted and interpreted as the main reason why Seleukos did not divorce her after Alexander's death. Apama and her Persian background have also been factored into Seleukos' success in the Near East, especially in the capture of Babylon. We must bear in mind, however, that we have neither literary nor epigraphic evidence that indicates the extent to which Seleukos relied on his wife's agency, the prestige of her natal family, or any of her connections.²⁰ Though Seleukos very well may have relied on whatever links that might have existed with his Sogdian wife's family during his campaign in Baktria in 308, on the whole we can only speculate about whether Apama herself took an active part in her husband's dealings with the local élites. The "Apama-factor"²¹ which John Grainger holds as decisive for Seleukos' confident claim on Baktria cannot be assessed with any degree of certainty, as we do not even know where she stayed during her husband's campaigns.²² In order to understand Seleukos' success in Baktria, Laurent Capdetrey, for example, takes a different tack that does not rely on Apama's influence, but instead emphasizes the expansion of the Mauryan Empire to the north – thereby explaining the feeble resistance against Seleukos as he was deemed the lesser of two evils.²³

19 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6; Plut. *Demetr.* 31.3. Strab. 15.8.15 confuses Apama with the daughter of Artabazos. On Apama, see Shahbazi 1987, 150; O'Neil 2002, 161–4; Nourse 2002, 238–44; Heckel 2006, 39; Müller 2013b, 206–9, as well as other papers in this part of the volume (Almagor, Engels and Erickson, Ramsey).

20 On Apama's name and connections to the Achaimenids: Tarn 1929, 140; Ogden 1999, 119; Heckel 2006, 39; Müller 2013b, 206 and Ramsey in this volume; on Apama and Seleukos' campaign in Baktria: Holt 1988, 100 f.; Grainger 1990, 106; Nourse 2002, 239; Biemann 2003, 45 f.; Müller 2013b; Olbrycht 2013, 170 f. Much more cautious: Mehl 1986, 18 f. as well as Engels and Erickson in this volume.

21 Grainger 1990, 152.

22 A Milesian honorary decree (*IDidyma* 480; see below) mentions Apama's goodwill and support towards Milesian soldiers who were campaigning with Seleukos; the honors were moved by one Demodamas son of Aristides who also proposed honors for Seleukos and Antiochos (*IDidyma* 479). This Demodamas was identified as *strategos* of the king during his campaigns in Baktria 306/4 (Plin. *NH* 6.49; see Robert 1984; Sherwin White and Kuhrt 1993, 26 f.); thus Apama's support to his soldiers may have taken place in Baktria as well; see Ramsey in this volume.

23 Capdetrey 2007, 39–43.

Many other recent assessments of Apama's role in regards to Seleukos' actions in the Near or Middle East or as to his rise to kingship²⁴ lack foundations in the positive evidence. I would like to suggest a more cautious approach. First, we cannot know for certain the nature of Apama's possible connections to Persian royalty. Of all the Susan brides, only in the cases of the brides for Alexander and Hephaistion, Stateira, Parysatis and Drypetis, as well as for the bride of Krateros, Amastris, are a close relationship to the Achaimenids attested in our literary sources. But this is not the case for Apama – even outside the context of the Susan mass wedding.²⁵

The fact that Seleukos remained married to Apama after Susa and did not choose any further brides has puzzled modern scholars, who surmise that this was the product of simple romantic attachment and see no other possible reason to explain this seemingly odd move.²⁶ But Seleukos might have postponed his decision regarding what to do with his Sogdian bride as he was not forced to separate from her due to political reasons – as was the case with Krateros, who publicly dissolved his Susan marriage. In the ensuing struggle for power after Alexander's death, Krateros deemed an alliance with Antipatros more valuable, and he divorced his Persian wife Amastris in order to marry Phila. Beforehand, however, he had arranged an advantageous marriage between Dionysios, the tyrant of Herakleia Pontike, and his ex-wife, which befitted her position as niece of the last Achaimenid king.²⁷ It has been argued that polygamy was not an option for Krateros as he was not a king – unlike Philip and Alexander.²⁸ While Philip used his many marriages to forge various political alliances, Krateros' choice to be married to only one woman at a time emphasized the value and exclusivity he gave to this alliance with Antipatros. Perhaps his monogamy was not so much the product of an unwritten Macedonian marriage rule for commoners as it was a conscious choice that was as strategic as Philip's polygamous marriages.²⁹

Instead of trying to fit the Diadochs' nuptial strategies into certain patterns or traditions, I would rather argue that we ought to emphasize the structural possibilities that are inherent to polygamy and monogamy. Louis Gernet has treated the many marriages of the Sicilian tyrants in such a fashion,³⁰ and in a similar manner

24 See also the contribution of Ramsey in this volume. – Based on the genealogical claims of Antiochos I of Kommagene and Alexander of Megalopolis, Tarn 1929, 140f. speculates about a legend developed in the 2nd century BC that identifies Apama as a daughter of Alexander. Ogden 1999, 119 even takes this as factual, regarding Seleukos as the initiator of the story. However, there is no evidence that supports the existence of this legend. On Antiochos I of Kommagene, see also the contribution of Strootman in this volume.

25 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6.

26 Grainger 1990, 12; Müller 2013b, 206.

27 On Amastris, see Nourse 2002, 171–82.

28 See O'Neil 2002, 172. See Carney 2000, 23–7 on royal polygamy with the Argeads; on Philipp's marriages, see Satyros F 25 Schorn = Ath. 13.557B–E = *FHG* III 161 F 5.

29 Perdikkas found himself in a similar situation when he had to choose between Antipatros' daughter Nikaia and Alexander's sister Kleopatra. In this case, polygamy was clearly not a third option, as a marriage with the one would automatically have triggered a confrontation with the other (or her father respectively).

30 Gernet 1953.

the Diadochs who acted within a highly precarious political situation also employed marital alliances in order to stabilize or even enhance their power. So while Krateros and Lysimachos cultivated serial monogamy, Demetrios and Pyrrhos of Epiros instead opted for a polygamous strategy.

At any rate, in 323 Seleukos could not claim the same political status as Krateros, Perdikkas, Antigonos, Leonnatos, or even Ptolemy, all of whom were far better equipped to play an important part in the power struggle as they boasted higher authority and more numerous supporters. It is therefore little wonder that Seleukos was not a prominent suitor for the hand of Alexander's sister Kleopatra or a daughter of Antipatros. Against this background, the question of what to do with a superfluous Iranian wife, and thus the choice between polygamy and monogamy, may never have presented itself – at least not in the early years after the death of Alexander.³¹ It is only in retrospect that scholars might be puzzled that Seleukos, who would soon empower himself in the largest share of the Macedonian empire, had initially been an irrelevant figure in the 'marriage market' of the Diadochs. The constellation of king and queen, therefore, should not be assessed by the simple classification of monogamy or polygamy, and neither should it be reduced to Apama's political role during her husband's campaign in the East. Even if she played a part, it did not seem to play a decisive role in Seleukos' self-representation and did not find its way into our literary sources.

Focusing on the constellation of king and queen, two aspects of Seleukos' kingship can be mentioned for certain. First, Appian³² gives accounts of the many cities that were founded by Seleukos, who far exceeded his contemporaries with such a sheer number of foundations. Seleukos quite literally imprinted his rule onto his empire by naming these cities after himself, and also after his father (or son) Antiochos, his mother Laodike and his wives. There are four known Apameias named after Seleukos' wife: Apameia in northern Mesene, Apameia Rhagiane in Choarene, and the more famous Apameia on the Orontes in Syria as well as Apameia on the Euphrates opposite Seleukeia.³³ Seleukos thus prominently placed his first wife and the mother of his son on the map of his empire and presented her as an important aspect of his newly founded dynasty – Seleukeia and Apameia on the

31 It is not clear whether Seleukos married an Indian princess in the context of his treaty with Chandragupta or gave away an otherwise unknown daughter; Appian (*Syr.* 55) and Strabo (15.2.9) only mention that they contracted a marriage relationship (ζῆθος / ἐπγαμία). Mehl 1986, 173–6 argues against a royal marriage, but for the establishment of legal marriages between Indians and Greeks; also see Wenghofer and Houle in this volume. In any case, this did not affect his marriage with Apama. Furthermore, we do not know whether Apama was still alive, suffered divorce or any decline of status when Seleukos married Stratonike; on this problem, also see Engels and Erickson, as well as Ramsey in this volume. Only pointing towards the polygamous practice of other Diadochs (so Ogden 1996, 120) falls short of explaining the marriage life of Seleukos.

32 App. *Syr.* 57. He mentions only three Apameiai founded by Seleukos.

33 On Apameia on the Orontes (= on the Axios), see Cohen 2006, 94–101; on Apameia in Mesene, see Cohen 2013, 125–8; on Apameia on the Euphrates, see Cohen 2013, 67–9 (the connecting bridge is mentioned by Pliny *NH* 5.86); on Apameia Rhagiane, see Cohen 2013, 204.

Euphrates were connected by a bridge and might be seen as giving “geographic testament to their marriage”, as Alex McAuley has phrased it.³⁴

Elizabeth Carney has pointed out that naming newly founded cities or re-naming existing cities after royal women became commonplace in the wake of Ipsos. Kassander, who named his foundation Thessaloniki after his wife, the daughter of Philip II, in 315 BC, had been a frontrunner of this trend which served to assert the legitimacy of the kings.³⁵ Nonetheless, as Carney has also pointed out, the city names cannot be taken as indicative of any real power of royal women; they rather stood as “cyphers” for a dynastic claim on the conquered territory.³⁶ Seleukos’ foundations clearly emphasized the dynastic pretensions of his and his family’s rule: In quantitative terms, the onomastic presence of his parents and his son respectively – Appian counts sixteen Antiocheias and five Laodikeias – appears overwhelming. We can also add to this the many foundations whose names evoked his Greco-Macedonian heritage. From a very early date, Seleukos did not limit this new propagandistic tool to his own *persona* or his father’s, but included his closest female relatives – his mother and wives – thereby acknowledging them as public figures associated with his own *basileia*.³⁷

Furthermore, we have evidence that Apama was presented to and perceived by the subjects of the Seleukids as a queen beside her royal husband. In a Milesian decree dating to 299 BC, Apama is honored for her *eunoia* and her *prothymia*, her good-will and zealous support, towards Milesian mercenaries who had fought for her husband in Baktria.³⁸ She also supported the Milesian envoys who asked for the king’s help in rebuilding the temple at Didyma – a program that was also supported by their son Antiochos, who was accordingly honored with a bronze statue.³⁹ The inscription is important in many ways: Apama is addressed as *basilissa* and thus is the first royal woman attested with this title after Phila. Phila’s benefactions are recorded in literary sources and she appears to act independently in order to support her husband. Apama is mentioned as a gatekeeper to Seleukos, but not as a benefactress in her own right. Nonetheless, the Milesian *demos* honored Apama for her support and later set up a statue of her in the temple of Artemis; the statue corresponded to the statue of Seleukos that was set up in the temple of Apollo. Hence we see another example of royal pairing.⁴⁰

It is remarkable how quickly the Greek *poleis* adjusted themselves to the ‘monstrosity’ of a king who would threaten their *autonomia* and *eleutheria*. While the cities of Asia Minor in particular had successfully coped with the Persian king, in

34 McAuley 2011, 20.

35 Carney 1988, 141.

36 Carney 1988, 141–2. See also Nourse 2002, 228 ff.

37 Furthermore, Seleukos did not focus his new-founded Apameias in his wife’s homeland thereby emphasizing and limiting her to her Sogdian background, but, just as his Seleukeias, the cities named after his first wife and queen were founded throughout his empire.

38 *IDidyma* 480. See Orth 1977, 17–21; Sherwin White and Kuhrt 1993, 25–7; Bringmann and von Steuben 1995, no. 281; Bielman 2002, 64–8; Nourse 2002, 243–6.

39 *OGIS* 213 = *IDidyma* 479.

40 *OGIS* 745 = *IDidyma* 113. On the statue of Seleukos, see *OGIS* 744 = *Milet* I 3, 158. See Kotsidu 2000, no. 267.

the Greek discourse of one-man rule the negative image of the tyrant was never revised in favor of a good *basileus*.⁴¹ Yet the *poleis* had to accept nearly simultaneously the even more ‘monstrous’ notion of the queen as an influential woman acting in the political sphere.⁴² The Milesians recognized that the king could not only be reached via his *philoî*, but also via his family, his wife or his son. While no title or formal position of a crown prince was ever developed then or later during the Hellenistic age,⁴³ the title and position of a queen was recognized almost as quickly as the title of the king.

The inscription offers a glimpse of the character of the queen’s position and how she was viewed in relation to the king. Yet it seems that Seleukos was not – at this point of his rule at least – overly concerned with propagating a clearly defined position of *basilissa*. So when he sought the hand of Stratonike, the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes and Phila, some time after 300, there is no information about Apama’s fate. It has been variously surmised by scholars that she died before this second marriage or that she was sent away – presuming that there was only room for one *basilissa* next to the king.⁴⁴ As polygamy cannot be ruled out and Apama’s position of queen had not been emphasized irrevocably, it may well be that she continued her life as before – only that Seleukos began rebuilding the role of a queen with regard to Stratonike.

IV. *LIAISONS FABULEUSES*: SELEUKOS, ANTIOCHOS, AND STRATONIKE

The marriage with Stratonike which served to establish an alliance between Seleukos and Demetrios Poliorketes was celebrated ca. 300/297 BC with great pomp and circumstance in Kilikian Rhosos. Stratonike and Seleukos had a daughter, conspicuously named Phila after her maternal grandmother, which emphasized the Antigonid-Antipatrid connection.⁴⁵ Apart from this, however, we hear nothing about Stratonike in our literary sources prior to her unconventional interactions with Antiochos. As the wife of Seleukos, she seems to have lived a rather understated life, just as Apama had for the most part, or perhaps she even lived alongside the older queen. Yet just as in the case of Apama, Seleukos emphasized her status as

41 See Luraghi 2013, 19.

42 See Martin 2009, 329–335, on the segregation of the sexes as a prerequisite for *isonomia* and the formation of a *demos*.

43 Cf. Alonso Troncoso 2005, 241–2.

44 See, e.g., Cohen 2006, 95 who dates the foundation of Apameia at the Orontes before Seleukos’ marriage to Stratonike, as he would not believe the propagation of two queens at the same time. A separation is assumed by Macurdy 1932, 78, Apama’s death by Grainger 1990, 152 and Engels and Erickson in this volume; more cautious: Mehl 1986, 229; Ogden 1999, 119f.; Nourse 2002, 251f.; Müller 2013, 208f., as well as Ramsey in this volume. John Malalas (8,198) reports that Seleukos married Stratonike after Apama’s death, but his late account seems confusing and unreliable (Ogden 1999, 119: “a monogamist’s misapprehension”). Also cf. Engels & Erickson in this volume.

45 On the marriage and the ceremony in Rhosos: Plut. *Demetr.* 31.3–32.3. On Stratonike, see Macurdy 1932, 78–82; Carney 2000, 171f.

the king's consort by naming a new foundation after her – though we do not know the exact site of this Stratonikeia.⁴⁶

Stratonike's position changed in 294 when Seleukos decided to establish his son Antiochos as *basileus* and co-ruler in Babylon. In a unique step, he passed on his wife Stratonike to his son, presenting both of them together as king and queen at court. The famous love story of the prince falling for his young stepmother and the selfless father giving up his bride – as well as possible oriental precedents for the episode – have been treated in depth by Eran Almagor in this volume.⁴⁷ I shall thus focus only on the consequences that this unprecedented manoeuvre (for a Greek audience, at least) had on the perception of the two kings, Seleukos and Antiochos, and the constellation of king and queen.

Seleukos is the figure with whom authority lay: he made the decisions, and, according to the literary accounts, it seems that neither his son nor his wife had any say in the matter. Be this as it may, Antiochos was established by his father not only as a king with a queen by his side, but was further legitimized as king by his queen and wife. Seleukos, however, remained king – but without a prominent queen. He neither remarried nor did he bring Apama – if she was still alive – to the fore again, at least if we can trust the silence of our lacunose sources. His manoeuvre served him well in various ways, as he did not sever his diplomatic relations to Demetrios Poliorketes but rather reconfigured them by giving away Stratonike.⁴⁸ At the same time he also avoided what Daniel Ogden terms “amphimetric strife”: the rivalry of brothers born by different mothers, which was about to threaten a smooth succession among Ptolemy's and Lysimachos' offspring.⁴⁹ Stratonike had not yet given Seleukos a son, but was now assigned to be the potential mother of the heirs of Antiochos – and thus the foundation of the dynasty's third generation was laid.

For Antiochos, his father's choice proved to be a totally different matter. He did not marry the widow of his predecessor as a “stakeholder”⁵⁰ to stabilize his rule, as had been the case with Antigonos III Doson who married Demetrios' II widow Chryseis, or Attalos II who married Stratonike (even twice).⁵¹ Instead he was married to her at the instigation of the current ruler. Leaving the story of the love-sick

46 App. Syr. 57. Strab. 14.2.25 mentions one Stratonikeia in Karia and also one near the Tauros (see also Stephanos, s. v. *Stratonikeia*); it is not clear whether one of these is Seleukos' foundation mentioned by Appian as also Antiochos I and Antiochos II could have been the founders commemorating their wife, mother or sister respectively. See Cohen 2006, 197 f.

47 On Stratonike's marriage to Antiochos, see Plut. *Demetr.* 38.1–9; App. Syr. 59–61; Lucian Syr. *Dea* 17 f.; Val. Max. 9.5.7 ext. 1; Suda s. v. *Erasistratos*. Cf. Mehl 1986, 230–268 with a discussion of the sources, the historicity of the love story and a rather constitutional approach on the investiture. For a discussion of the literary topoi, see Mesk 1913; Brodersen 1985; Hillgruber 2010; Almagor in this volume. As a part of Seleukid propaganda to stress the magnanimity of Seleukos: Breebaat 1967.

48 See Engels and Erickson in this volume.

49 Ogden 1999, 122–3, who calls it a “kind of levirate movement *inter vivos*” and points out possible Achaimenid precedents (see the contribution by Almagor in this volume); on Lysimachos: Ogden 1999, 59–62. See also Biellmann 2003, 47 who emphasizes the practical reasons on Seleukos' part not to complicate the succession.

50 On the role of the widow, see Goody 1966, 10 ff.

51 First in 171 when he assumed that his brother Eumenes II was dead, and then again in 159.

prince aside, Antiochos' rule was thus initially predicated on his marriage to his father's wife. While Stratonike had not been visible as a *basilissa* next to Seleukos during their marriage (at least as far as we know), she was now, in a way, a precondition to Antiochos' rule as she figured prominently in the ceremony which made him king. Seleukos' manoeuvre elevated and formalized her position immensely, whereas before she had 'just' been a royal wife to Seleukos: by combining Antiochos' marriage to Stratonike with his elevation as king, Seleukos in the process also made her a queen. Such a move was not necessary for establishing co-rule, as demonstrated by the Antigonids in 307/6 and the Ptolemies in 285/4.

We may well wonder whether this act is the indication of an all-powerful king: as Seleukos intertwined the status of his son as king with Stratonike, he chose, on the one hand, a powerful symbol to arrange for his succession in a timely manner; on the other hand, it was also clear that Antiochos, unlike his father, did not assume his rule and his new dignity on his own merits alone. His position as ruler was at least partly defined by his wife – in a way that his father's position never had been. The love story might thus have been designed to cover up this irregularity among early Hellenistic kings, as well as Greek men in general, whose identity and power was hardly defined by their wives.⁵²

Stratonike's status, for her part, became ambivalent through all this: she was not only an Antigonid *qua* birth, but also a Seleukid *qua* re-marriage, because it was her husband who married her off in 294, not her father – who by all accounts was not consulted in the matter. Though she was made queen by her first husband during a very unique wedding to her second husband, Stratonike herself quite vigorously promoted her status as *basilissa* in a unique manner. In her many dedications in Delos, she presents herself as *basilissa* Stratonike, daughter of the *basileus* Demetrios and twice as the daughter of the *basilissa* Phila.⁵³ It is not clear whether Stratonike acted on her own, or whether she promoted the interests of her husband Antiochos or even her brother Antigonos Gonatas in the latter's competition with

52 See Roy 1998, 116. – The prominent position of the queen in relation to king Antiochos is also emphasized in the building inscription on the Borsippa cylinder: Stratonike is mentioned as consort and queen which is unusual because, as Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991, 83 point out, queens were never mentioned in Persian royal inscriptions (*BM* 36277, col. II, l. 26 f.). They explain this irregularity by Stratonike's highly important part as a "stakeholder" in the delicate business of transferring power over an enormous, newly-founded empire" (*ibid.*, 85).

53 As *basilissa* Stratonike: *IG* XI 2.287 B l. 21; *IG* XI 2.161 B, l. 15, 78; *ID* 442 B, l. 161. As daughter of *basileus* Demetrios: *IG* XI 2.287 B l. 66–8; *ID* 442 B, l. 185. As daughter of *basileus* Demetrios and *basilissa* Phila: *ID* 442 B, L. 33, 198. On Stratonike's dedications at Delos, see Bringmann and von Steuben 1995, no. 156–66; Kosmetatou 2010; and Ramsey in this volume. *IG* XI 2.199 B, l. 51 mentions the dedication of King Demetrios' gold necklaces, two thigh bands and an oriental bracelet by a 'mere' Stratonike. Prêtre 2012, 188 argues that the dedication was given by Stratonike to commemorate the wedding of her daughter Phila to Antigonos Gonatas in 277; Kosmetatou 2010 argues for a joint dedication of Demetrios Poliorketes and Stratonike in the context of her own wedding with Seleukos. As a title is not given to Stratonike, it seems that this dedication took place before her first marriage; the other dedications cannot be dated precisely but it is generally assumed that they took place after her marriage to Antiochos (see above).

the Ptolemies for the loyalty of the Nesiotai.⁵⁴ Stratonike continued the euergetic activities of her father, and very likely did so with the approval of her husband. As a benefactress, however, she presented herself as a *basilissa* and a royal daughter.⁵⁵ Antiochos is not mentioned, so it seems that her queenly status was not derived by marriage to a king, but by being descended from a royal couple. Her 'Seleukid' status was not mentioned; Stratonike rather used her hereditary royal dignity to act autonomously as an Antigonid. In the process, interestingly, she did not make any reference to the constellation of king and queen – unlike what her predecessor Apama had done in her role as gatekeeper to the king.

V. CONCLUSION: THE MAKING OF A QUEEN

After Alexander's death, new ways of becoming and remaining king had to be developed, often through trial and error. We can see this in many different contexts, but quite prominently in how the Diadochs married and presented their wives. When a king married, his wife did not automatically become a queen; a king did not fundamentally need a queen in order to rule, and yet the figure of the *basilissa* still emerged as early as 306. The case of Seleukos Nikator and his wives demonstrates both aspects: Seleukos did not need a queen to establish his rule: he might have relied on Apama's connections in Sogdia and Baktria to stabilize his hold on the East, though it seems that neither her family background nor any of her particular personal skills alone prompted him to set her up as queen. But he still promoted his Iranian wife as an important part of his dynasty-in-the-making, particularly in the context of his city foundations. We also see that the Greek *poleis* at a very early point responded to the presence of a queen. While we do not know who came up with the idea of the *basilissa*, the Milesian decree nevertheless demonstrates how quickly the king's wife was addressed with a corresponding title and how readily she was accepted as part of the king's *persona*. Apama's successful intervention on behalf of the Milesians demonstrates how the *basilissa* became an integral part in the interaction between *basileus* and *polis*.

Yet it was Seleukos himself who finally *made* the queen as he connected his son's kingship with both his marriage to Stratonike, and his association with her personal queenship. Unlike his father, Antiochos was at least to some degree defined by his queen. The blame for any problems this constellation caused may well be put on Seleukos, whose own rule never depended on his wife in any way. Stratonike, however, did not derive her status as *basilissa* exclusively from her royal husband, but referred instead to her father and mother as justification of her own royalty. Her dedications in Delos give testimony of how a *basilissa* was able to act with a certain measure of autonomy and that she was not defined as a Seleukid alone, but rather as a go-between her natal and nuptial family.

54 On the Nesiotai and Delos, see Buraselis 2013, 174–7; on Antigonos Gontatas' policy in the Aegean, see Buraselis 1982, 160–70. In 253 BC, probably one year after Stratonike's death, *Stratonikeia* games were dedicated commemorating the queen, very probably by her brother, see Buraselis 1982, 143.

55 See Carney 2000, 171–2.

APAMA AND STRATONIKE – MARRIAGE AND LEGITIMACY

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the first two Seleukid Queens, Apama and Stratonike, played a pivotal role in the development of the dynastic mythology. The latter drew heavily on Near Eastern and Persian traditions, and the often stock role of the Queen may have been in fact filled by either of the two women. Nonetheless, both women played an important part in the development of Seleukid ideology. The first two sections study the evidence for Apama and Stratonike respectively and try to locate them into their family context, their ethnic affiliations and the political implications of these factors for their roles as royal consorts. The next two sections analyse Persian and other Oriental traditions that affected the creation of their queenly roles at the Seleukid court and in the imagination of later generations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The marital politics of the early Seleukid court began in a straightforward fashion, lacking the intrigue of the courts of either Alexander or his father Philip. Seleukos remained married to the bride that he had received from Alexander in the mass weddings at Susa, she even bore him a legitimate heir.¹ However, with his marriage to the daughter of Demetrios, this stable family life could have been thrown into chaos. That this possible domestic crisis did not materialise and instead the potentially problematic wife helped stabilise the transfer of power demonstrates the skill with which Seleukos was able to manage his court. This paper argues that the development of this stable dynastic mythology needed to take into account both of the first two Seleukid queens, Apama and Stratonike, and that they may have had some part in shaping its construction. With two queens from very different backgrounds, one Sogdian and one Macedonian, ruling over an empire composed of Greeks, Syrians, Iranians, Babylonians, and others, this dynastic mythology understandably developed on existing Near Eastern and Iranian traditions which had long circulated around ruling families. Given the nature of these traditions, it was often possible that the stock role of the ‘Queen’ may have been in fact filled by either of the two women. Nonetheless, both women played an important part in the shaping of Seleukid ideology. To analyse their roles and traditions, this chapter is divided into two halves. The first deals with each queen in turn, Apama and Stratonike: it will be tried to locate them into their family contexts and their ethnic affiliations before

1 Arr. 7.4.4–8 and 7.6.2; Diod. 17.107.6; Plut. *Alex.* 70.3; Just. 12.10.9 f.; Athen. 12.538b–540a.

specifying the political implications of these factors for their roles as royal consorts. The second half of the chapter looks at the traditional narratives into which the two women were incorporated. One section analyses the Iranian tradition, while the other probes a variety of other Oriental and Greek traditions that affected the creation of their queenly roles at the Seleukid court.

II. APAMA

The conquest of the Upper Satrapies by Alexander the Great had been an act of military violence, relying on martial superiority and the legitimacy of spear-won territory. The long-term consolidation of Macedonian rule, however, could only be realised through political reconciliation and cultural fusion. This found concrete expression through the appointment of Iranian satraps like Phrasaortes,² Alexander's visit to the tomb of Kyros in 330,³ the introduction of Persian court practices like *proskynesis*,⁴ the presence of Persian nobles at his court,⁵ and the forced fusion of Macedonian soldiers and generals with Iranian wives at the mass wedding of Susa in 324.⁶ Alexander's death, much lamented by the Persian nobility,⁷ threatened the long-term stability of Greek domination over the Iranian plateau that he had tenuously forged. Peukestas, then satrap of Persia, maintained the fragile compromise established by Alexander, as he came to wear Median garments, learned to speak Persian, adopted Iranian customs and thus won the sympathies of the Persian nobility.⁸ By his careful politics of neutrality during most of the Diadoch wars, and his endeavours to reconcile the local aristocracy which respected traditional Achaimenid protocol,⁹ Peukestas managed to keep Persia out of the major conflicts that unfurled around it and became the leader of a coalition of Iranian satraps.¹⁰

But after extended manoeuvring between Eumenes and Antigonos, he was finally deposed by the latter in 315. The takeover of Babylonia by its former satrap Seleukos changed the whole situation again, as Seleukos drove a wedge into Antigonos' possessions. Unlike his enemy, the newcomer tried to respect local tra-

2 Arr. 3.18.11; Curt. 5.6.11.

3 Diod. 17.73.1; Curt. 5.6.10–20; Strab. 15.3.7ff.; Plut. *Alex.* 69.4–5.

4 Arr. 7.11; Plut. *Alex.* 45.

5 Arr. 6.30.1; 7.4.4; 7.6.1; 7.6.4–5; 7.11.8–9; Plut. *Alex.* 69.1–2; 70.3; 71.1; Diod. 17.67.1; 17.107.6; 17.108.1–3; Just. 12.10.9–10.

6 Arr. 7.4.4–8 and 7.6.2; Diod. 17.107.6; Plut. *Alex.* 70.3; Just. 12.10.9–10; Athen. 12.538b–540a.

7 Arr. 7.24.1–3; Diod. 17.116.2–4; 17.118.3; Plut. *Alex.* 73.7–74.1; Curt. 10.5.9; 10.5.16–25; Just. 13.1.5–6.

8 Arr. 6.30.2–3; 7.6.3; 7.23.3; Diod. 19.14.5.

9 Cf. the well-known feast organised by Peukestas before 316: Diod. 19.22.2–3; see Wiesehöfer 1994, 53–54 with literature and Boyce and Grenet 1993, 20–1. The possible identity of the altars erected by Peukestas with the inscriptions found at Persepolis has often been underlined; cf. Wiesehöfer 1994, 72–3.

10 Diod. 19.14.1–8.

ditions, and thus attempted to win the sympathies of his new subjects.¹¹ During a decisive battle in Media against Nikanor, Antigonos' *strategos* of the Upper Satrapies,¹² in autumn 312, the Persian satrap Euagros fell, and his troops defected to Seleukos.¹³ Thus, after his victory over Nikanor, Seleukos could consider Persia his possession, and apparently occupied the entire territory without any further major struggle.¹⁴

By 309, Seleukos had already established his rule over the Achaimenid core-territories of Babylonia, Media and Persia and even managed to make peace with Antigonos, but the subsequent conquest of the Upper Satrapies proved more difficult. The extent to which Seleukos I was successful in this process of completing Alexander's dream of constructing and defining a Greek monarchy over Iranian territories was not only due to his political, military and diplomatic skills, but also to the incalculable help provided by his Iranian wife Apama and his son Antiochos I.¹⁵

One major political asset for Seleukos was the well-known fact that Alexander had married him to Apama during the mass wedding at Susa.¹⁶ The daughter of the Baktrian aristocrat Spitamenes,¹⁷ she was the only known bride from the North East of Alexander's Empire, except Alexander's own marriage to the Sogdian princess Roxane. However, the old supposition that Seleukos was the only Greek general to have kept his Iranian wife, whereas all others divorced them, is no longer sustainable. This hypothesis is based on no more than Arrian's suggestion of the Macedonian generals' dislike for their forced weddings¹⁸ and a single case of divorce specified in our sources.¹⁹ Yet Apama is the only Iranian wife still attested after Alexander's death and certainly the only one of all diadochs' wives to have borne the royal title²⁰ and given birth to a son officially styled crown prince. By contrast, Alexander IV, Alexander the Great's son with Roxane, as well as Herakles, his son with Barsine, encountered substantial racial prejudice from the Macedonian soldiers.²¹ Of course it is unknown to what extent this union was due to love, to simple dynastic strategy, or to the fact that Apama had already given birth to Seleukos' son Antiochos in 324 and thus could not easily be dismissed. But it is beyond any doubt that Antiochos' Iranian lineage must have been considered a major asset in his and his father's pol-

11 Diod. 19.91.1–2; App. Syr. 54.274. Cf. in general Boiy 2004 and 2007.

12 Diod. 19.92.3–5.

13 Diod. 19.2.4–5.

14 Grainger 1990a, 80–1; Wiesehöfer 1994, 56, but cf. also Mehl 1986, 134 f., dating the occupation of Persia to 307/6.

15 Concerning Apama, cf. in general Wilcken 1894; Holleaux, 1942b; Macurdy 1932, 77–8; Robert 1984; and the relevant parts of the biographies on Seleukos I by Mehl 1986; Grainger 1990a, besides the papers of Almagor, Harders and Ramsey in this volume.

16 See in general Arr. 7.4.

17 Arr. An. 7.4.6: To Nearchos he gave the daughter of Barsine and Mentor; to Seleukos the daughter of Spitamenes the Baktrian.

18 Arr. 7.6.2.

19 Memnon *FGrH* 434 F 1 records that Krateros divorced his wife, a daughter of the last Achaimenid king, but took care to marry her to Dionysios, tyrant of Herakleia Beroia.

20 Cf., e.g., *IDidyma* 480 = Austin² no. 51.

21 Just. 13.2.9–10; Curt. 10.6.13–15.

itics of reconciliation, as Seleukos decided to ignore the memory of the numerous problems Alexander's offspring encountered and instead kept his Iranian wife and his half-Iranian son.²²

Little is known about Apama herself or her origins. The historiographical debate often borders on fiction, as may be shown when examining two hypotheses proposed by W. W. Tarn.²³ First, Tarn argued that Apama might have been considered by some, at least in later times, as a natural daughter of Alexander,²⁴ not of Spitamenes. This version had been fabricated, according to Tarn, to endow Seleukid rule with the legitimacy of the great Macedonian conqueror, but one which is obviously erroneous when it comes to some basic points of chronology. Tarn infers his hypothesis from Livy, speaking of the curious onomastic strategy of a Megapolitan named Alexander:

Amynander had married Apama, daughter of a Megalopolitan, called Alexander, who, pretending to be descended from Alexander the Great, had given the names of Philip and Alexander to his two sons, and that of Apama to his daughter.²⁵

Similarly, Antiochos I of Kommagene claimed descent from Alexander through the Seleukids, a curious explanation, as there are no known dynastic links between the two houses.²⁶ Tarn tried to show that a genealogical link between Apama and Alexander might have been thought possible in the 2nd and 1st centuries, while also illustrating Apama's actual family connections. Considering the rarity of the name 'Apama', Tarn supposed that Spitamenes' daughter might have been a descendent of the only other attested person to have borne that name, a daughter of Artaxerxes II Mnemon, who married the satrap Pharnabazos.²⁷

It is of course unnecessary to underline how thin both hypotheses are, but it is important to note that in antiquity, knowledge about Apama was probably quite limited, as is shown by these two aforementioned speculative associations. It is thus likely that the Seleukids might have consciously exaggerated Apama's rank, if we consider that the dynasty of Pontos tried to claim Kyros I and Dareios I as ancestors, whereas the Ariarathids of Kappadokia similarly claimed descent from Kyros

22 See Harders this volume.

23 Cf. Tarn 1929, 139; Balty 1977, 109.

24 Tarn 1951, 140.

25 Liv. 35.47.5: *Amynder uxorem Apamam, filiam Alexandri cuiusdam Megalopolitani, habebat, qui se oriundum a magno Alexandro ferens filiis duobus Philippum atque Alexandrum et filiae Apamam nomina imposuerat.* Cf. similarly App. Syr. 13: τῶν τις Μακεδόνων Ἀλέξανδρος, ἐν Μεγάλῃ πόλει τραφεῖς καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ πολιτείας ἀξιωθείς, ἑτεροατεύετο γένος Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ Φιλίππου προσήκειν, γενομένους τέ οἱ παῖδας ὠνόμασεν, ἐς πίστιν ὃν ἐλογοποιεῖ, Φιλίππον τε καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ Ἀπάμαν, ἣν Ἀμυνάνδρῳ πρὸς γάμον ἡγγύησεν. (A certain Macedonian, named Alexander, who had been educated at Megalopolis and admitted to citizenship there, pretended that he was a descendant of Alexander the Great, and to make people believe his fables he named his two sons Philip and Alexander and his daughter Apama.)

26 OGIS 388–401. For the Seleukid ancestors, see Saunders 1996, 306–55 and Strootman this volume.

27 Plut. *Artax.* 27. The king had several daughters, and promised to give Apama in marriage to Pharnabazos, Rhodogyne to Orontes, and Amestris to Teribazos.

I and the kings of Kommagene from Dareios I.²⁸ Aside from Tarn's speculations, unfortunately nothing more regarding Apama's ancestry is known. Nor do we have any more certainty about how the Seleukid house used the rumours about Apama, which certainly would have been circulating in the various regions of the Empire.

As with her ancestry, Apama's influence on her son is equally unknown to us except for some scarce indications. The fact that one of Seleukos' and Apama's daughters was also named Apama, and that one of Antiochos I's and one of Antiochos II's daughters bore the name as well,²⁹ shows the important and obviously positive place the Baktrian aristocrat's daughter occupied within the family's collective memory. Furthermore, at least three cities were named after her; the two most important being Apameia in the Syrian tetrapolis and Apameia twinned with Seleukeia across the Euphrates as Zeugma.³⁰ If Seleukos had merely tolerated Apama, her name would neither have been included in the dynasty's nomenclature in such a prominent fashion nor linked so closely with his own eponymous foundations.³¹

Her prominence can be further stressed, if one recalls Apama's active role in the relationship between Miletos and the royal court. This relationship is attested by two Didymaeon inscriptions which name her together with her son in 299, and both relate to a time when Seleukos dwelled in the East. They show her not only bearing the title of *basilissa*, but also participating autonomously in giving of gifts to the future dynastic god, Apollo from Didyma.³² Another dedication to Leto, Artemis, and Apollo at Delos emphasised her prominence within the Greek sphere as well.³³

Apama probably died in 299, which is both the year in which we last hear of her and when Seleukos married Stratonike. The date of Apama's death is a matter of considerable controversy, with a range of options having been proposed.³⁴ A conservative view of the marital relations of the Diadochs requires that Apama was either divorced or deceased when Antiochos married Stratonike in 299.³⁵ On the other hand, D. Ogden and others have argued that, like Philip II, many of the early Hellenistic courts were polygamous, and that it would have been unnecessary for Seleukos to divorce Apama before marrying Stratonike.³⁶ Another possibility is that Apama's prominence was eclipsed by Seleukos' marriage to the Macedonian Stratonike, only to return after Stratonike's removal to the east with Antiochos in

28 Painitschek 1986.

29 Euseb. *Chron.* 1.249 Schoene; van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11, Text A 13.

30 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 15; Grainger 1990a, 75–7; Ogden 1999, 119. These were, of course, not the only cities named after Apama; for a complete list, see *RE*.

31 Müller 2013b, 208.

32 *IDidyma* 479 (= *OGIS* 213) and 480.

33 Müller 2013, 208.

34 See Müller 2013b, 208–9. For her survival, see Macurdy 1932, 78–9; Brosius 1996, 79. For her death in 299, see Heckel 2006, 39.

35 Beloch 1912–1927, iv.2, 304; Holleaux 1923/1942, 1; Macurdy 1932, 78; Bickerman 1938, 28; Vatin 1970, 86 n. 2; Heckel 2006, 39; referenced but not endorsed Müller 2013b, 208–9.

36 Tarn 1929, 139; Brosius 1996, 79; Ogden 1999, 119–20; referenced but not endorsed Müller 2013b, 208–9.

294.³⁷ There is no positive evidence for such a return after 294, so this hypothesis must remain pure speculation. To sum up, it seems much safer to suppose that the disappearance of Apama from the sparse historical record after 299, after her earlier prominence, strongly suggests that she died in that year or shortly thereafter.

One final area in which Apama may have had some lasting influence on the dynasty was her relationship with her son, the future king Antiochos. Did she teach Antiochos some Persian? Again, one might consider it probable, if one remembers the very dominant place of some royal consorts and queen mothers at the Macedonian as well as at the Achaimenid court.³⁸ Familiarity with the Persian language might also be suggested by the fact that a certain number of Seleukid princes received Iranian names, which they exchanged for dynastic names only if or when they assumed royal power.³⁹ The continuous, or at least frequent, marriages between Seleukid and Iranian noble and royal families enhance the probability of a durable Iranian cultural element at the Seleukid court. The Seleukid dynasty thus was, from its very beginning, equally Iranian as Macedonian,⁴⁰ a condition that was regularly perpetuated by marriages with other Iranian dynasties like the kings of Pontos,⁴¹ Kappadokia,⁴² Sophene⁴³ and, albeit involuntarily, Parthia.⁴⁴ Also further marriages with Eastern Iranian families are possible, but not yet firmly attested.⁴⁵

To sum up our knowledge about Apama, it is obvious that her ethnicity and the mixed ancestry of her son must have been important factors in the apparent acceptance of Seleukid rule in the Upper Satrapies, even if it is difficult or impossible to quantify their actual influence on the local aristocracy's loyalty. Unfortunately,

37 Bielman Sánchez 2003, 46 followed by Schmitt 2005, 560; Müller 2009, 20 n. 15; Müller 2013b, 209.

38 Cf. Aisch. *Pers.* 155–6 and Athen. 556b; see also Demandt 1995, 118.

39 Although this name may have come from his maternal grandfather, a son of Antiochos III seems to have been called Mithridates, but adopted later on the name of Antiochos (IV), as appears from *SEG* 37, 1987, 859 (A 1–4) (from 198/7) and Liv. 33.19.9, who also mentions a second son named Ardys. Cf. Holleaux 1912; Schmitt 1964, 23; Wörle 1988, 428–9; 451–2 and Mehl 2000, 18–26, who wonders to what degree the name *Mithridates* was still perceived as essentially Iranian at this time, given its popularity in the Pontic region. *Ardys* may be understood as *Arses* (*Aršū*), the name borne by three Achaimenid kings later on known as Artaxerxes (I, II and IV); cf. Briant 1996, Index s. v. Arses 1–3. The tradition of adopting a throne name with dynastic connotations is also known from Seleukos III, initially called Alexander according to Euseb. *Chron.* 1.253 Schoene = 119 Karst.

40 Underlined by Bengtson 1951, 137.

41 Just. 38.5.3; Euseb. *Chron.* 1.251 Schoene; *Chron. Arm.* 118 Karst (Mithridates II marries Laodike, sister of Seleukos II); Polyb. 5.43; 74.5; 8.21.7. 22.11 (Antiochos III and Achaïos marry the two daughters of Mithridates II and Laodike); *OGIS* 771 (Pharnakes I and Nysa, perhaps a grand-daughter of Antiochos III). See also D'Agostini Forthcoming.

42 Diod. 31.19.6; Euseb. *Chron.* 1.251 Schoene; *Chron. Arm.* 118 Karst (Ariarathes III and Stratonike, daughter of Antiochos II); Diod. 31.19.7; App. *Syr.* 5.18; Zonar. 9.18.7 (Ariarathes IV and Antiochis, daughter of Antiochos' III).

43 Polyb. 8.23; Johann. Antioch. F 53 (*FHG* IV p. 557) (Xerxes and Antiochis, sister of Antiochos III).

44 Just. 38.9–12; App. *Syr.* 67.356 (Demetrios II and Rhodogune; Phraates II and a daughter of Demetrios II).

45 Cf. Schmitt 1964, 101; Wenghofer and Houle in this volume; Wenghofer Forthcoming.

nothing more of consequence is known about the queen, but there are some curious anecdotes concerning Stratonike, the second wife of Seleukos, which we might be tempted to associate in some way or other with Apama.

III. STRATONIKE

As was the case with the woman she replaced at Seleukos' side in 299, even though Stratonike entered the Seleukid house as a pawn in a larger political game, she nonetheless appears to have quickly established herself as a powerful force in her own right.⁴⁶ Stratonike was the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes and Phila, who was herself the daughter of Alexander's regent in Macedon, Antipatros.⁴⁷ This distinguished descent gave Seleukos a solid connection to several prominent Macedonian families. The importance of the connection to Macedon for Seleukos is explicitly stressed in the speeches that accompanied Stratonike's subsequent marriage to Antiochos. Furthermore, Seleukos gave his daughter the name of Stratonike's mother, Phila, perhaps indicating that he sought to maintain the link to the well-respected wife of Antipatros and enhance his own claim to his homeland.

The marriage of Stratonike to Seleukos completed another reversal of fortune for King Demetrios, who only two years previously had been defeated by a coalition of other Hellenistic kings, led by Seleukos and Lysimachos, on the battlefield at Ipsos and subsequently driven out of Athens.⁴⁸ In marrying Demetrios' daughter and thus allying himself with his former enemy, Seleukos was doubtless thinking of the model provided by Ptolemy's support for him when he had been forced to flee his own satrapy in the face of Antigonos Monophthalmos' forces.⁴⁹ Both sides stood to benefit from the match: for Demetrios, this marriage gave him a new powerful ally in the east to help him reassert his influence in mainland Greece and Macedon. For Seleukos, the marriage provided an opportunity to gain the upper hand against his former allies: Lysimachos to his north-west, and Ptolemy, who had joined Seleukos and Lysimachos in opposing Antigonos and Demetrios, in the south.

The spoils of their joint victory brought new areas of conflict to Lysimachos, Ptolemy and Seleukos. Ptolemy had established his control over Koile-Syria (although he abandoned it shortly before the battle took place)⁵⁰, but the territory was

46 Cf. in general Mesk 1913; Gebhard 1931; Breebart 1967; Landucci 1978; Macurdy 1932, 78–82; Hillgruber 2010 and the literature cited below concerning the legend of the lovesick Antiochos.

47 Plut. *Demetr.* 31 and 32.

48 Plut. *Demetr.* 30–1; Diod. 21.1.4; For the relative strengths and weaknesses of his position, see Manni 1951, 41–3; Shear 1978, 72. Demetrios had remained in control of the largest of the successors' fleets, and their bases in Kypros, Tyre and Sidon, as well as Korinth. The League of Islanders had also remained loyal.

49 Diod. 19.55; App. *Syr.* 53. For an account of Seleukos' removal from Babylon, see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 10; Grainger 1990a, 31–51; Mehl 1986, 52–5. For the chronology, see Boiy 2007.

50 Polyb. 67.8 Plut. *Demetr.* 30; App. *Syr.* 55; Diod. 21.1.5; see now Grainger 2010, 33–5.

attributed to Seleukos after the battle of Ipsos, thus creating the basis for conflicts that would not be resolved until the dissolution of the Seleukid monarchy.⁵¹ As for Lysimachos and Seleukos, the two main victors, they now had to govern adjacent territories (with the division running perhaps along the Halys River)⁵² and could thus develop new territorial ambitions. As these new arrangements soon required a concurrent shuffling of alliances, Demetrios became, once more, a valuable partner. He had already proven himself a worthy and resilient opponent, and his control of the Greek islands and his footholds in the Mainland which he had managed to retain provided the opportunity to resist both Ptolemaic and Lysimachean claims, all the while doing little to threaten Seleukos' immediate interests in Asia, the Levant or the Upper Satrapies. However, his control of footholds around Syria and the conquest of Kilikia, achieved when on his way to marry Stratonike to Seleukos,⁵³ could have posed a significant threat to Seleukos' newly won territory in Syria.

The alliance with Demetrios through marriage to Stratonike thus offered several advantages to Seleukos. He not only stabilised the northern frontier of his new Syrian territories, but also gained a levy in order to oppose Ptolemaic and Lysimachean interests in the Aegean world, as shown by his increased advertisement of his interest in the 'freedom' of the Greek cities of Asia Minor.⁵⁴ The marriage also served as a counter to the marriage alliance formed between Lysimachos and Ptolemy, with Lysimachos marrying Arsinoë, the daughter of Ptolemy and Berenike.⁵⁵ It thus appears that Seleukos intended to use this marriage and resulting alliance to counter the rapprochement of his former allies. Given the longstanding hostility between the two, it is perhaps not surprising that a marriage between the houses of Seleukos and Demetrios was not the solution initially desired by either side.⁵⁶ Yet Demetrios appears to have been unsuccessful in finding a more suitable match for his daughter; in fact, he may even first have attempted to tie himself to the Ptolemaic house, because Stratonike dedicated a statue for the Ptolemaic King and Queen in Hierapolis/Bambyke.⁵⁷ It is not entirely clear that this undated inscription and dedication occurred after Ipsos, but it must date before the marriage either of Arsinoë to Lysimachos, or of Stratonike to Seleukos – both circa 299. Because the period before Ipsos saw increasing hostility between Ptolemy and Demetrios, this must have made a marriage alliance improbable. If the dedication therefore took place between 301 and 299, it would suggest an effort at reconciliation by Demetrios towards Ptolemy. But the marriage alliance between Lysimachos and Ptolemy de-

51 Diod. 21.1.4; See Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 14; see now Grainger 2010.

52 Lund 1992, 80–1.

53 Plut. *Demetr.* 31; Manni 1951, 46.

54 For the use of 'Freedom of the Greeks' as a tool of Hellenistic propaganda, see now Wallace 2011. See also Lund 1992, 89–90; Manni 1951, 44.

55 Plut. *Demetr.* 31; Just. 15.4.24; see Lund 1992, 88; Ogden 1999, 59. Bennett 2013 dates Arsinoë's marriage before 298 on the basis of the ages of her children with Lysimachos at their deaths in 282.

56 Manni 1952, 43–4.

57 See Ferrario 1962; *OGIS* 14: Βασίλισσαν Ἀρσινόην βασιλέως / Πτολεμαίου καὶ βασιλέως Βερενίκης / Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου.

prived both Demetrios and Seleukos of other options and forced them into arranging a political marriage of convenience.

In the early period of this alliance between Demetrios and Seleukos, everything seems to have gone according to plan: Demetrios focused less on expanding his base in Kilikia at Seleukos' expense, and instead resisted Ptolemaic incursions elsewhere. But as with all early Hellenistic alliances and marriages, a stable relationship between the two kings did not develop beyond some short-term advantages. As soon as Seleukos consolidated his own power in his new territories, including the foundation of the cities of the Syrian tetrapolis with many of the citizens drawn from the recent foundation Antigoneia,⁵⁸ he began to move against Demetrios once more. That this break between the two did not come even earlier appears to be the result of Demetrios' decision to focus on resisting Ptolemy. At the same time, Seleukos, whose new Syrian territories were encircled by Demetrios' main body of strength (Kypros, Kilikia, Tyre and Sidon), preferred to focus on the consolidation of Syria before risking a new war. The friendly exchange at the wedding perhaps engendered some frail measure of trust between the two kings, whereas Stratonike may have continued to retain some influence with her father and was able to persuade both sides to put aside their hostilities until other matters were settled.

Stratonike not only appears to have played a key role in determining Demetrios' aims in this period and giving Seleukos some years of relative peace, but she was also critically important in Seleukos' attempts to consolidate his new territories formerly held by Demetrios and his father, transferring the loyalty of the inhabitants away from the Antigonid house and toward her new family.⁵⁹ However, the lack of an attested city foundation bearing her name in Syria at this time may be an additional indicator of the general unease Seleukos might have felt towards the former soldiers of Antigonos and Demetrios who had settled in the region.⁶⁰ Only after the cities had grown to a significant size and the populations had shifted their loyalty to the king who had granted them new lands,⁶¹ did he dare to invade Demetrios' strongholds in Kilikia. It is possible that his marriage to Stratonike had allowed the men to transfer their allegiance across parts of the combined house, but that naming a city after an Antigonid princess, despite her new role in the Seleukid house, was too strong a reminder of their previous loyalties.⁶²

A specific instance of Stratonike's influence may be seen at work in Hierapolis/Bambyke in Northern Syria. From the dedication discussed above, it appears that she had long-lasting connections to the region. In the early Seleukid period, the city

58 Diod. 20.47.5–6; See Grainger 1990b, 37–9; Cohen 1978, 16–7; Downey 1961, 56–66.

59 See Mitchell ca. 2016 for the argument that the Macedonian settlers in Asia Minor were already settled by the time Seleukos took control of the region.

60 Phila provides a useful precedent for her daughter's activity in promoting her new family's rule through, diplomatic work, sending support to her husband, and providing advice. See Wehrli 1964; Carney 2000, 165–9; Carney 2012, 312–3; Diod. 19.59.5, 20.93.4; Plut. Demetr. 22.1, 32.3.

61 However, this loyalty appears to have been conditional, if we understand the Syrian revolt implied by *OGIS* 219 = *Illion* 32 = Austin² no. 139.

62 See McAuley Forthcoming and in this volume for the argument that married royal women retained some allegiance to their natal house.

was given a Greek name and was elevated to the status of a Greek polis.⁶³ If the change of civic status occurred under Seleukos I, then we probably should credit it to the stories about her activity at the sanctuary, as related to us by Lukian and discussed below. The patronage of a city or a temple fits well with the queen's role, despite the lack of cities named in her honour. Instead she may have extended her euergetism to help ease the transition of the soldiers who had served under her father and were now settled within Seleukos' new Syrian cities.⁶⁴

The honeymoon ended in 294, when Seleukos removed Demetrios' control over Kilikia⁶⁵ and, at the same time, married Stratonike to his son and sent them both to the Upper Satrapies to rule over the East.⁶⁶ Antiochos appears to have brought his new bride with him on his tours of the eastern provinces, befitting, as Ogden has argued, Seleukos' goal of establishing his son's legitimacy through marriage to his own wife,⁶⁷ and it also moved Stratonike away from her father in order to prevent her undermining Seleukid power in favour of her father.⁶⁸ This move may have ended her influence over Seleukos and his policy, allowing for an open break between him and Demetrios. However, as Stratonike remained queen, it seems that Seleukos did not wish to completely break diplomatic relations with Demetrios and that by retaining his daughter future reconciliations remained possible. While Stratonike may have lost her influence over one Seleukid king as she was married to another, at the same time she must have gained some influence over her new husband.

Antiochos' and Stratonike's activities in the eastern part of the empire are largely shrouded in mystery, but, as Engels has argued, Antiochos was far from idle since he embarked on a large building programme and was active in securing the frontier.⁶⁹ There is some evidence to suggest that his new bride accompanied him for much of this period. We can perhaps identify Stratonike's presence with her new husband in the Upper Satrapies through the gold coinage minted in Susa and Baktria in c. 287. The two gold coin sets are of the same type, the obverse features the laureate head of Apollo facing right and the reverse features Artemis in an elephant *biga* facing left with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ in exergue.⁷⁰

63 Grainger 1990a, 147.

64 See *IDidyma* 480 for Apama's support of Milesian soldiers serving in her husband's army. The most likely area for this support is in her homeland. See Robert 1984.

65 Plut. *Demetr.* 31; Manni 1951, 46.

66 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 25; Ogden 1999, 121–4; the date of accession, a long time debated, is now secured thanks to a cuneiform tablet dated to 18 November 294 (*BM* 109949).

67 See Ogden 1999, xix for the principle of dynastic marriage as method by which to secure legitimacy.

68 McAuley 2013.

69 Engels Forthcoming.

70 Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 163 and 257.



Figure 1: Coin of Seleukos I from Baktria Depicting Apollo on the Obverse and Artemis with Elephant Biga on the Reverse (Houghton and Lorber 2002, SC I no. 163).
Collection of Arthur Houghton, with his permission.



Figure 2: Coin of Seleukos I from Baktria Depicting Apollo on the Obverse and Artemis with Elephant Biga on the Reverse (Houghton and Lorber 2002, SC I no. 257).
Collection of Arthur Houghton, with his permission.

The reverse image of Artemis in the elephant *biga* is within the same design type as a large range of other coinage issued by Seleukos I celebrating the success of his elephants and thus his eastern campaigns. The appearance of Artemis is however unique to these coin types.⁷¹ This suggests the emphasis on the close links between the twin gods, Artemis and Apollo, depicted on the obverse and reverse of this coinage. Since there appears to be as a close link between Apollo and Antiochos⁷² as there is between Zeus and Seleukos, the presence of Artemis could be seen as a symbol for Stratonike.⁷³ This would create a series of parallels: Seleukos/Zeus, Antiochos/Apollo, and Stratonike/Artemis. The first two reflect what we see for

71 If the coins were linked to the entry of Antiochos into the satrapy perhaps this meant to be linked with Apollo and his wife, Stratonike, with Artemis.

72 For Babylon see Erickson 2011, for the conflation of Apollo and the image of the Persian King see Erickson and Wright 2011.

73 This linking between Stratonike and Artemis might be extended further if we consider both her and Antiochos' relations with the gods at Borsippa, as Erickson 2011 has argued we can see not only a syncretism between Antiochos and Apollo but also between Antiochos and Nabû. Stratonike is unusually prominent in the foundation cylinder for the temple in Borsippa, a discussed below, and interestingly Strabo refers to the city as τὰ δὲ Βόρσιππα ἱερὰ πόλις ἐστὶν Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος (Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.1.7).

these two kings at the list of priests of Seleukid kings in Seleukeia in Pieria.⁷⁴ Additionally, it may be notable that the sister-wife ideology, though entirely fictional, appears to be evident later in the reign of Antiochos I.⁷⁵

As all of the Apollo/Artemis cointypes were produced on high value gold coinage, this suggests that it was issued in order to commemorate a significant event. While the type was similar to other Seleukid coinage, the shift from Athena to Artemis was clearly discernible and unique. The arrival of the new joint-King and Queen in the region to take up residence would have been a suitable moment for the issuing of the new coin type.⁷⁶ This advertisement of their new rule certainly falls in line with Seleukos' wedding speech which confirmed their new roles.⁷⁷

Stratonike, however, only appears sporadically for the rest of Antiochos' reign. The most significant evidence for her prominence after her and her new husband's appointment to the east comes from late in the reign of Antiochos I and is linked to the Borsippa Cylinder, deposited in 268 BC, in which she is named as both queen and principal wife.⁷⁸ After her unconventional marriage to Antiochos, she appears to have adopted the normal role of a royal woman by acting as mother to royal children and 'a supporter of their ambitions'.⁷⁹ The unique reference to her in the Borsippa Cylinder demonstrates that she remained strongly tied to her second husband.

Stratonike's significance appears only to have grown when her children aged and took the throne. Thus, by the reign of Seleukos II, Stratonike had been honoured with a cult in Smyrna.⁸⁰ As with most civic cults for Hellenistic rulers, it is likely that a series of benefactions preceded the establishment of the shrine. The most probable time period in which to place her dedications to Smyrna is after her husband's arrival in Asia Minor in 276.⁸¹ This coincides with the other cult inscriptions for her in Asia Minor, including joint honours for her and her husband at Teos⁸² and in the cult of the Ionian koinon.⁸³ Her activity would then coincide with that of her husband in the region.

74 OGIS 245

75 See *Illion* 32.19–25, which is dated to ca. 275 in Coşkun 2012a, 61 n. 14.

76 Kritt 1997, 106–8 argues for the production of the elephant *biga* coinage as part of Antiochos' activities after having been named joint king in 295/4. However, he credits some of Antiochos' actions as a response to a no longer tenable view of an autochthonous revolt in Persis. For a new interpretation of early Hellenistic Persia and the local dynasty of the Frataraka, see Engels 2013.

77 Plut. *Demetr.* 38.8–9.

78 *BM* 36277 ii.26–27; Sherwin White 1991, 84.

79 *BM* 36277 ii.26–27; Sherwin White 1991, 84.

80 OGIS 228, 1–4: ἐπεὶ βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος βασιλέως / Ἀντιόχου ἀποστείλας γράμματα ποτὶ τὰν πόλιν ἅξιοι τὸ τε ἱερὸν τὸ τὰς Ἀφροδίτας τὰς Στρατονικίδος καὶ τὰν πόλιν τῶν Σμυρναίων / ἱερὰν καὶ ἄσυλον εἴμεν. (Since King Seleukos son of King Antiochos sent a letter to the city concerning the worthiness of the temple of Aphrodite Stratonikis and the city of Smyrna to be holy and inviolable), also see lines 10–12. See Coşkun 2015 and ca. 2016 on the historical background and Rigsby 1996, 95–102 for discussion of *asylia* decrees in their Hellenistic context.

81 See Coşkun 2012a, 59–61.

82 *ITeos* 95 = *CIG* 3075

83 OGIS 222 = *IKlazomenai* 1.5 = *IErythrai* 504

It would be surprising, in light of the Syrian revolt mentioned in the Ilion decree,⁸⁴ if Stratonike did not have some role in attempting to re-establish loyalty to her husband amongst her father and grandfather's former troops as she was the only credible Antigonid available.⁸⁵ Depending on how the passage of Lukian's *De Dea Syria*, discussed below, is interpreted, she also may have continued her patronage of the temple of the Syrian goddess in Hierapolis.⁸⁶

Given this broad range of activities, surprisingly little hard evidence survives about Stratonike herself. Apart from being the passive object of Antiochos' desire and, for the most part, a political pawn in the games of her father and her first husband, she appears to have had some influence on early Seleukid policy and was honoured after her death by the cities of Asia Minor (and probably the Seleukids themselves) at least by the reign of her grandson Seleukos II. Her power in her first marriage was derived from her family connections, either ensuring an alliance with her father or attempting to win over the loyalty of his former troops. Her role in her second marriage is harder to determine, though she is referred to reverentially in the Borsippa Cylinder and as a goddess in her own right at Smyrna. Combined with the love story that preceded her marriage to Antiochos, this suggests that she held a significant degree of persuasive power over her husband. In one final way, her role appears to have paralleled the woman she replaced: her husband(s?) may have named a series of cities after her.⁸⁷

IV. STRATONIKE AND APAMA, LUKIAN AND FIRDAUSI

Now that we have discussed the historical lives of the two most prominent women in the early Seleukid court; let us now turn to the legends and stories that grew up around them. The ultimate reasons as to why Seleukos decided suddenly to give his wife to his first son probably will have to remain unknown. Doubtless, there must be some link to Seleukos' abandonment of his alliance with Stratonike's father. The romantic story of Antiochos' consuming passion for his stepmother Stratonike⁸⁸ and of her apparently magnanimous transfer to Antiochos by Seleukos however is well-known, mostly through the popular version in Plutarch:⁸⁹

84 OGIS 219 = *Illion* 32 = Austin² no. 139, dated to ca. 275 in Coşkun 2012a, 61 n. 14.

85 For what may have been expected of Stratonike with her father's and grandfather's troops, Apama's actions concerning Milesian troops in Baktria may serve as an important precedent and example. See Robert 1984; *IDidyma* 480 = SEG 26.1234 = SEG 34.1075 = SEG 4.442.

86 Luk. *Syr. D.* 17–21.

87 App. *Syr.* 57. Stratonikeia in Karia: Strab. 14.2.25; Cohen 1978, 15. Mitchell ca. 2016 argues that the majority of settlements in Asia Minor were already founded before the Seleukids took over the area. It is also possible that Stratonikeias in Asia Minor may have been after Attalid Stratonikes.

88 Cf. in general Funck 1974a; Brodersen 1985, Fischer 1993 and the relevant chapters in biographies on Seleukos by Mehl 1986 and Grainger 1990a.

89 A similar version of the story is told in App. *Syr.* 59–61. See Almagor in this volume for discussion of the tradition.

For it came to pass, as it would seem, that Antiochos fell in love with Stratonike, who was young, and was already mother of a little boy by Seleukos. Antiochos was distressed, and resorted to many means of fighting down his passion, but at last, condemning himself for his inordinate desires, for his incurable malady, and for the subjugation of his reason, he determined to seek a way of escape from life, and to destroy himself gradually by neglecting his person and abstaining from food, under pretence of having some disease. But Erasistratos, his physician, perceived quite easily that he was in love, and wishing to discover who was the object of his passion (a matter not so easy to decide), he would spend day after day in the young man's chamber, and if any of the beauties of the court came in, male or female, he would study the countenance of Antiochos, and watch those parts and movements of his person which nature has made to sympathize most with the inclinations of the soul. Accordingly, when anyone else came in, Antiochos showed no change; but whenever Stratonike came to see him, as she often did, either alone, or with Seleukos, lo, those tell-tale signs of which Sappho sings were all there in him, – stammering speech, fiery flushes, darkened vision, sudden sweats, irregular palpitations of the heart, and finally, as his soul was taken by storm, helplessness, stupor, and pallor. And besides all this, Erasistratos reasoned further that in all probability the king's son, had he loved any other woman, would not have persisted to the death in refusing to speak about it. He thought it a difficult matter to explain the case fully to Seleukos, but nevertheless, relying on the father's kindly feelings towards his son, he took the risk one day, and told him that love was the young man's trouble, a love that could neither be satisfied nor cured. The king was amazed, and asked why his son's love could not be satisfied. 'Because, indeed,' said Erasistratos, 'he is in love with my wife.' 'Then canst thou not, O Erasistratos,' said Seleukos, 'since thou art my son's friend, give him thy wife in addition to thy friendship, especially when thou seest that he is the only anchor of our storm-tossed house?' 'Thou art his father,' said Erasistratos, 'and yet thou wouldst not have done so if Antiochos had set his affections on Stratonike.' 'My friend,' said Seleukos, 'would that someone in heaven or on earth might speedily convert and turn his passion in this direction; since I would gladly let my kingdom also go, if I might keep Antiochos.' So spake Seleukos with deep emotion and many tears, whereupon Erasistratos clasped him by the hand and told him he had no need of Erasistratos; for as father, husband, and king, he was himself at the same time the best physician also for his household.⁹⁰

- 90 Plut. *Demetr.* 38: συνέβη γάρ, ὥς ἔοικε, τὸν Ἀντίοχον ἐρασθέντα τῆς Στρατονίκης νέας οὔσης, ἥδη δὲ παιδίον ἔχουσής ἐκ τοῦ Σελεύκου, διακείσθαι κακῶς καὶ πολλὰ ποιεῖν τῷ πάθει διαμαχόμενον, τέλος δ' ἑαυτοῦ καταγνόντα δεινῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμῖν, ἀνῆκιστα δὲ νοσεῖν, κεκρατῆσθαι δὲ τῷ λογισμῷ, τρόπον ἀπαλλαγῆς τοῦ βίου ζητεῖν καὶ παραλύνειν ἀτρέμα καὶ θεραπείας ἀμελεία καὶ τροφῆς ἀποχή τὸ σῶμα, νοσεῖν τινα νόσον σκηπτόμενον. (3) Ἐρασίστρατον δὲ τὸν ἱατρὸν αἰσθῆσθαι μὲν οὐ χαλεπῶς ἐρώντος αὐτοῦ, τὸ δ' οὔτινος ἐρᾶ δυστόπαστον ὃν ἐξανευρεῖν βουλόμενον αἰεὶ μὲν ἐν τῷ δωματίῳ διημερεῖν, εἰ δὲ τις εἰσίοι τῶν ἐν ὥρᾳ μειρακίων ἢ γυναικῶν, ἐγκαθορᾶν τε τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Ἀντίοχου καὶ τὰ συμπάσχειν μάλιστα τῇ ψυχῇ τρεπομένη πεφυκότα μέρη καὶ κινήματα τοῦ σώματος ἐπισκοπεῖν. ὥς οὖν τῶν μὲν ἄλλων εἰσιόντων ὁμοίως εἶχε, τῆς δὲ Στρατονίκης καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὴν καὶ μετὰ τοῦ Σελεύκου φοιτήσης πολλάκις ἐγίνετο τὰ τῆς Σαπφούς ἐκεῖνα περὶ αὐτὸν πάντα, φωνῆς ἐπίσχεσις, ἐρύθημα πυρῶδες, ὄψεων ὑπολείψεις, ἰδρώτες ὀξεῖς, ἀταξία καὶ θόρυβος ἐν τοῖς σφυγμοῖς, τέλος δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ κράτος ἡττημένης ἀπορία καὶ θάμβος (5) καὶ ὠχρίασις, ἐπὶ τοῦτοις προσολογίζόμενον τὸν Ἐρασίστρατον κατὰ τὸ εἰκός, ὥς οὐκ ἂν ἐτέρας ἐρῶν βασιλέως υἱὸς ἐνεκαρτέρει τῷ σιωπᾶν μέχρι θανάτου, χαλεπὸν μὲν ἡγεῖσθαι τὸ φράσαι ταῦτα καὶ κατελεπεῖν, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ πιστεύοντα τῇ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν εὐνοίᾳ τοῦ Σελεύκου παρακινδυνεύσαι ποτε καὶ εἰπεῖν, ὥς ἔρω μὲν εἶη τοῦ νεανίσκου τὸ πάθος, ἔρω δ' ἀδύνατος καὶ ἀνίατος. (6) ἐκπλαγέντος δ' ἐκείνου καὶ πυθομένου πῶς ἀνίατος, "ὅτι νῆ Δία" φάναι τὸν Ἐρασίστρατον "ἐρᾶ τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικός." (7) "εἰτ' οὐκ ἂν" εἰπεῖν τὸν Σέλευκον "ἐπιδοίης Ἐρασίστρατε τῷ ἐμῷ παιδί φίλος ὢν τὸν γάμον, καὶ ταῦθ' ὀρῶν

To confirm this transfer, Seleukos gave a public oration and presented the couple to the assembled army, referring, as supposed by Garnier and others, to the Macedonian tradition of the military assembly.⁹¹ This address culminated, according to Plutarch and Appian, in the following statement, which has been considered by E. Bickerman, M. Rostovtzeff, G. Downey and others as key to Seleukid ruler ideology:⁹²

It is fitting that all of you, who had advanced to such greatness of dominion and power under me since the time of Alexander, should cooperate with me in everything. The dearest to me, and well worthy to reign, are my grownup son and my wife. As they are young, I pray they may soon have children to be an ample guarantee to you of the permanency of the dynasty. I will join them in marriage in your presence and will send them to be sovereigns of the upper provinces now. And I charge you that none of the customs of the Persians and other nations is more worthy of observance than this one law, which is common to all of them, 'That what the king ordains is always right.'⁹³

If we believe this tradition, Seleukos not only stressed Alexander's example and the importance of congruent interests among the ruled and the ruling, he also seems to have referred explicitly to Persian absolutism as a valuable and obliging tradition. In the process he justifies his own royal authority with the sentence: αἰ δίκαιον εἶναι τὸ πρὸς βασιλέως ὀριζόμενον (that which the king ordains is always right). It remains unknown to what extent the core of this undoubtedly embellished speech, which had successively been traced back to Hieronymos of Kardia, Phylarchos, or Duris of Samos,⁹⁴ really relied on contemporary Seleukid historiography or whether it should be considered a simple rhetorical exercise based – perhaps – on vague memories. Brodersen has stressed some similarities with Herodotos' description of

ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τούτῳ μόνῳ σαλεύοντας; "οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν σύ" φάναι "τοῦτο πατὴρ ὢν ἐποίησας, εἰ Στρατονίκης Ἀντίοχος (8) ἐπεθύμησε." καὶ τὸν Σέλευκον "εἴθε γὰρ ἐταίρε" εἰπεῖν "ταχὺ μεταστρέψαι τις ἐπὶ ταῦτα καὶ μεταβάλῃ θεῶν ἢ ἀνθρώπων τὸ πάθος· ὡς ἐμοὶ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀφείναι καλὸν Ἀντίοχου περιεχομένῳ." (9) ταῦτ' ἐμπαθὼς σφόδρα τοῦ Σελεύκου καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν δακρύων λέγοντος, ἐμβالόντα τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτῷ τὸν Ἑρασιστράτον εἰπεῖν, ὡς οὐδὲν Ἑρασιστράτου δέοιτο· καὶ γὰρ πατὴρ καὶ ἀνὴρ ὢν καὶ βασιλεὺς αὐτὸς ἅμα καὶ ἰατρὸς εἴη τῆς οἰκίας ἄριστος.

91 Garnier 1931, 161 contra Breebaart 1967, 158.

92 Bickerman 1938, 11; Rostovtzeff 1927, 155–96; cf. also Downey 1941, 167 and Hillgruber 2010.

93 App. Syr. 61: δίκαιοι δ' ἐστέ μοι πάντες ἐς πάντα συνεργεῖν, οἱ ἐς τοσοῦτον ἀρχῆς καὶ δυνάμεως ἠϋξήθητε ὑπ' ἐμοῦ μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρον. φίλτατοι δ' εἰσὶ μοι καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄξιοι τῶν τε παίδων ὁ τέλειος ἦδη καὶ ἡ γυνή. ἦδη δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ παῖδες ὡς νέοις γένοιντο ταχέως, καὶ πλέονες φύλακες ὑμῖν τῆς ἡγεμονίας εἶεν. ἀρμόζω σφίσιν ἀλλήλους ἐφ' ὑμῶν καὶ πέμπτω βασιλέας εἶναι τῶν ἐθνῶν ἦδη τῶν ἄνω. καὶ οὐ Περγάμον ὑμῖν ἔθνη καὶ ἐτέρων ἐθνῶν μᾶλλον ἢ τόνδε τὸν κοινὸν ἅπασιν ἐπιθήσω νόμον, αἰ δίκαιον εἶναι τὸ πρὸς βασιλέως ὀριζόμενον. Cf. similarly Plut. *Demetr.* 38.11: πάνδημον εἰπεῖν, ὅτι βούλεται καὶ διέγνωκε τῶν ἄνω πάντων τόπων Ἀντίοχον ἀποδείξαι βασιλέα καὶ Στρατονίκην βασιλίδαν, ἀλλήλους συνοικοῦντας· οἴεσθαι δὲ τὸν μὲν υἱὸν εἰθισμένον ἅπαντα πεῖθεσθαι καὶ κατήκοον ὄντα μηθὲν ἀντερεῖν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν γάμον· εἰ δ' ἡ γυνὴ τῷ μὴ νενομισμένῳ δυσκολαίνοι, παρακαλεῖν τοὺς φίλους, ὅπως διδάσκωσιν αὐτὴν καὶ πείθωσι καλὰ καὶ δίκαια τὰ δοκοῦντα βασιλεῖ μετὰ τοῦ συμφέροντος ἡγεῖσθαι. It is worthwhile to note that for Plutarch, the reference to the king being always right is addressed to Stratonike and is not related to Persian customs.

94 Critical discussion in Brodersen 1985, 464.

Kambyases' incest with his sister:⁹⁵ "[...] though they could discover no law which allowed brother to marry sister, there was undoubtedly a law which permitted the king of Persia to do what he pleased."⁹⁶

Nevertheless, the idea that a king, as *logos empsychos*, is always right seems so topical that it would be an exaggeration to suppose that Seleukos' speech could only be understood through the allusion to Herodotos. We thus cannot exclude the possibility of the story ultimately going back to Seleukid propaganda and attempting to define early Seleukid sovereignty not only with reference to Greek, but also to Achaimenid royal ideology. There, the king's absolute power is based on his special relationship to Ahura-Mazda, whose divine order is protected on earth by the Achaimenid rule. And similarly to Ahura Mazda representing truth and righteousness and his enemy fostering lies and evil-doing, the Achaimenid king is thought to be the ultimate defender of this world order and to derive his power from Ahura Mazda's heavenly light, the Khvarnah. This parallelisation between God and Great King implies that everyone who opposes the king also sins against Ahura Mazda's 'truth' and favours the 'lie'. Thus, usurpers become godless sinners, whereas the king's supporters are truly religious, as is shown in Dareios' Behistun inscription:

On this account Ahuramazda brought me help, and all the other gods, all that there are, because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a despot, neither I nor any of my family. I have ruled according to righteousness. Neither to the weak nor to the powerful did I do wrong. Whosoever helped my house, him I favoured; he who was hostile, him I destroyed.⁹⁷

While this tradition concerning kingly power may have come to Seleukos primarily through the Macedonian and Persian courts, it was a long-standing tradition in the Near East which may have helped ensure the acceptance of his commands.⁹⁸ Quite obviously, the reference to Iranian traditions in order to legitimate the new Seleukid dynasty did not cease with the death of Apama, but was also used to legitimate the new roles of Stratonike and Antiochos as governors of the Upper Satrapies. Apart from these rather explicit issues regarding Persian royal legitimacy, the story of Stratonike's marriage to Antiochos also shows some other references to Oriental elements. Funck thus has tried to show that the specific narrative of this anecdote bears striking similarities to the legends of Ishtar. He supposed that the anecdote has either been gradually deformed by a Babylonian audience following local traditions, or may even have been circulated by Seleukid officials in a manner consciously stylised to suit the realm's Near Eastern subjects.⁹⁹

This interpretation has nevertheless been severely criticised.¹⁰⁰ It has not yet been sufficiently stated, however, that the anecdote may not only refer to a

95 Brodersen 1985, 467.

96 Hdt. 3.31: φάμενοι νόμον οὐδένα ἐξευρίσκειν ὃς κλεῦει ἀδελφεῇ συνοικεῖν ἀδελφεόν, ἄλλον μέντοι ἐξευρηκέναι νόμον, τῷ βασιλεύοντι Περσέων ἐξεῖναι ποιεῖν τὸ ἄν βούληται.

97 DB § 63.

98 For the ideology of lying as religious/political rebellion against the kings, see Pongratz-Leisten 2002.

99 Funck 1974a, 1313–4.

100 Brodersen 1985.

Babylonian background, but also to Iranian traditions. There are clear similarities between the lesser known Iranian traditions and the story of the Seleukid eunuch Kombabos, attested in Lukian's *De Dea Syria*,¹⁰¹ where we also find a variant of the love story between Stratonike and Antiochos.

First, a very brief summary of the tale in Lukian is in order. After introducing Stratonike by the familiar narrative of her transfer to Antiochos, Lukian relates how Kombabos castrates himself prior to taking the queen to oversee the construction of the temple at Hierapolis, which she had been repeatedly instructed to build by the goddess' appearance in her dreams. While doing so, she falls in love with Kombabos, and after failing to suppress her passion (in a wonderful reversal of the Antiochos love story), she imbibes heavily and approaches him. He then rejects her and discloses the proof of his actions. The king hears rumours of the goings on and recalls Kombabos to him. Kombabos returns and displays the material proof of the impossibility of his infidelity.

Of course, on one level, this legend is a literary fiction proposing a rather unconvincing aetiology of the castration of Syrian priests and a mockery of eunuchs at the eastern courts.¹⁰² On another level, it shows interesting similarities not only with the Stratonike-Antiochos tale, but also with other Near Eastern traditions like the legend of Joseph, Ishtar and Tammuz, demonstrating once more how the memory of the early Seleukids had been linked to local traditions in Syro-Mesopotamia.¹⁰³ Yet the story also has Iranian connotations: the future eunuch's name strongly resembles Kombaphis, the favorite eunuch of a pharaoh in an anecdote by Ktesias, which probably circulated at the contemporary Achaimenid court.¹⁰⁴ These connections reveal a strong Near Eastern and also Iranian element to the story, though we should not allow these long-standing traditions to obscure the role that Stratonike plays in the narrative.

But the strongest argument for an Iranian link is the near repetition of the Kombabos story in Firdausi's *Shahname*, which refers not to the first Seleukid king and his *philos*, but to the first Sasanian king Ardashir and his minister and *archimagos*. The lengthy story can be summarised as follows: Ardashir, after overthrowing Parthian rule, married the daughter of the last Parthian king Ardawan. After some time and an aborted attempt by the Arsakid princess to murder her new husband and re-establish the old dynasty, Ardashir, quite understandably, wants to separate himself from her and assigns his minister with this task. Seeing that she is pregnant with a possible successor to the crown, the minister decides to hide her in order to spare her potential son. Fearing that the king might accuse him of treason in later years, he decides on the following:

He went into his house and there cut off his testicles; he then cauterized the wound, applied a salve to it, and bound it up. Pallid and groaning with pain, he quickly put the testicles in salt and placed them in a round jeweller's box, which he immediately sealed. He came into the throne

101 Luc. *DDS* 18–25. See now in general Oden 1977, Dirven 1997a; Lightfoot 2003; Andrade 2013, 288–313.

102 Lightfoot 2003, 384–5.

103 Cf. Albright 1944, 34; Oden 1977, 38; Andrade 2013, 298.

104 Ktes. *Pers.* § 19.

room, carrying the sealed box, and said, "I ask that the king entrust this to his treasurer." The date was written on the box, so that there could be no argument about when this had occurred.

Seven years after the child's birth, Ardashir learns of his minister's disobedience and possible adultery and condemns him to death. The story then continues as follows:

[...] The treasurer brought the box and handed it over. The king asked what was hidden under its seal, and the vizier answered, 'My own warm blood is there, and my shameful parts, cut cleanly from my body. You gave Ardavan's daughter into my keeping, saying that you wanted her to be a lifeless corpse. I didn't kill her, because she was pregnant, and I feared God's judgement on me if I did. I disobeyed your orders, but at the same time I castrated myself so that no one could speak evilly of me and soak me in a sea of infamy. Now your son Shapur is seven years old: no other king has had such a son, he resembles the moon in the heavens. I named him Shapur, and may the heavens smile on your good fortune. His mother is with him and has brought the young prince up.'¹⁰⁵

Although there are also similarities with other Indo-European legends about expelled and concealed heirs to the throne, as with Romulus and Remus or Kyros,¹⁰⁶ the detailed parallels with the story of Kombabos are too obvious to be ignored. As the legend is inseparably linked to the founding of Near Eastern royal dynasties through rulers like Seleukos or Ardashir, it has been supposed that the Kombabos legend initially originated at the Achaimenid court.¹⁰⁷ In this case, it very likely would have centred on the new ruling house's legitimacy through its descent from the Median dynasty in a manner similar to the description of Parthian-Sasanian continuity as expressed by the *Shahnameh* (and to the forced marriages between the Parthian and the Seleukid houses). The legend about Kombabos and Stratonike would then attest the existence of a link between the (hypothetical) Achaimenid and the Sasanian version of this narrative motif, constituting an important piece of evidence for the popular acceptance the Hellenistic dynasty seems to have found.

But whereas the *Shahnameh* explicitly points to the dynastic link between the Arsakids and the Sasanians, the Kombabos-Stratonike legends seem only concerned with issues within the already established Seleukid court. It then seems surprising that the Kombabos version of this legend, obviously belonging to a Near Eastern dynastic environment, is only concerned with Stratonike, married to Seleukos for scarcely five years. A more likely protagonist would have been Apama, a Baktrian princess married for 25 years to Seleukos, mother of four children and, most importantly, mother of the crown prince. Though highly speculative, we could formulate the hypothesis that Lukian's account of the Kombabos legend might not represent an initial version of the story. Indeed, it seems possible that Lukian, who also narrates the story about Antiochos' love for Stratonike in the same text, may have contaminated the queen of the initial Kombabos story with the name of the queen mentioned in the Antiochos story; an easily understandable error as Lukian lived 450 years after the events and as Near Eastern narratives usually do not assign

105 Firdausi, *Shahnameh* (transl. Davis 1997, 557–8).

106 Benveniste 1939.

107 See Briant 1996, 283: "Greffé sur des antécédents mésopotamiens, la légende de Kombabos n'est rien d'autre qu'une histoire de cour qui a été développée à l'époque achéménide."

names, but only roles like ‘king’, ‘queen’ or ‘minister’. In this case, we might equally suppose that a story about Kombabos’ castration was also motivated by the queen’s pregnancy, as in the Firdausi account, and that in some versions the exile was replaced by a long journey.

Should this supposition hold, a version of the Kombabos story, as it may have circulated in early Seleukid times as a popular actualisation of an Achaimenid narrative pattern, referred to Apama and not to Stratonike, and would have concerned her pregnancy with the future Antiochos I. In the *Shahnameh*, Ardashir’s ‘minister’ protected the last Parthian king’s daughter from execution and thus made it possible for Ardashir’s son, Shapur, to survive and later be (rightly) considered as a legitimate Arsakid as well as Sassanid. If we accept the possibility that this same pattern was also followed in the (hypothetical) Kombabos story featuring the Baktrian princess Apama rather than Stratonike, then Apama would have been (somewhat incorrectly) associated with a branch of the Achaimenid dynasty. Under this perspective, the story probably explained how Kombabos protected the last Achaimenid princess Apama from Seleukos’ wrath and thus assured the birth of Antiochos I, the Half-Iranian, Half-Macedonian prince¹⁰⁸ conciliating Macedonian and Iranian interests.

There is, however, a second way in which to interpret the relationship between the stories of Kombabos and Ardashir, which may tie the legend into a yet wider range of Seleukid ‘propaganda’ probably circulating around the early Seleukid court. Rather than Apama replacing Stratonike in any one ‘original version’, both women could be connected to these types of popular stories and legends which may have begun to circulate at the early Seleukid court. As with Apama, Stratonike plays an essential role in providing legitimate children and has a high profile both as queen and as queen mother. Thus both women would have played an essential role in the formation of dynastic identity, and both could be inserted into many of the familiar narratives.

108 Antiochos I seems to have been perfectly well aware of this, as attests the Borsippa cylinder; cf. Weissbach, 1911, 132–5; Sherwin-White 1991; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 36–8. Dated to the 28 March 268, the cylinder mentions Antiochos I as well as his father as kings of Babylon (*šar bābili*), and uses furthermore the epithet ‘great king’ (*šarru rabu-ū*), ‘mighty king’ (*šarru dan-nu*), ‘king of the world’ (*šar kiššati*) and ‘king of lands’ (*šar mātāte*). The inscription, even if in the continuity of similar inscriptions from Achaimenid times as the Kyros cylinder (e.g., Frg. a, 20–21), goes back to typical Babylonian formulae and shows Antiochos’ attempts to guarantee ideological as well as institutional continuity and suggests indirectly how improbable it would have been if he should not have extended this policy towards his Iranian possessions. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Antiochos designed his father as ‘Macedonian’ (*si-lu-uk-ku šarri / ma-ak-ka-du-na-a-a*), following the Achaimenid formula of insisting on the Persian kings’ ethnic origins (Dandamayev 1976, 210–4; Sherwin-White 1991, 83), but avoids using this descriptions for himself, though he repeats his kingship (Borsippa Cylinder Col. I 4–5; cf. Briant (1994, 459–67). This particularity one might perhaps attribute to the general claim that the Seleukids have ‘gone native’, but which, in a more direct way, corresponds to Antiochos’ mixed origins. Concerning the use of ‘King of Kings’ and ‘Great King’ under the Seleukids, cf. Engels 2014b.

In this respect, the stories about Stratonike and Apama are similar to the popular stories that grew up around Alexander.¹⁰⁹ The pregnancy/birth myth was common to Kyros, Antiochos (as we have suggested above) and Shapur; a similar story also exists outside the Persian tradition and is told of Sargon of Akkad.¹¹⁰ Alexander's birth story in the *Romance* may also partially fall into this tradition, but only Nektanebo's magic prevents Philip from rejecting the child. The shunning of a wife, son or advisor who must later be reintegrated into the royal court is another old story pattern that appears not only in Firdausi's account of Ardashir and Shapur, but also in the *Ahiqar* Romance tradition.¹¹¹ The story reappears in a Coptic tale of Alexander as well.¹¹² These stories in particular appear to have been part of a series of stories that were told at the Persian court,¹¹³ a tradition that the Sogdian Apama also may have brought into the Seleukid court. They can be connected for the most part to a longer Near Eastern/Iranian tradition, without excluding that some features were based on historical events, such as Stratonike's and Antiochos' wedding. At a later stage, such composite traditions could be re-absorbed by and re-transmitted to later Greek and Iranian storytellers.

Both Lukian's and Firdausi's narratives are comprised of two essential elements: the first (and for our purposes the least important) is the faithfulness of one of the royal *philoi*; the second is the infidelity of the royal consort, which threatened one of the most important of her functions, to provide legitimate children. In the *Shahnameh*, the events that lead to calls for the banishment of the wife and the murder of her unborn child consist of her attempt to murder the king and re-establish her father's power. The break between the two different courts over the raising of the child and right to the throne fits much better with the stories concerning Kyros' birth out of a union between the Median princess Mandane and the Achaimenid king Kambyzes I.¹¹⁴ Both the Kyros episode and the Ardashir story narrate the birth of the first king produced from the union of two dynasties, as would be the case with Antiochos from the union of Seleukos and Apama, assuming that Apama could have been considered an Achaimenid.

The traditions surrounding the earliest case of a dynastic union could thus have been drawn on for the birth of Antiochos. Notwithstanding this possibility, a significant difference remains in the relationship between the two houses as it is Seleukos rather than Antiochos who established the new dynasty. Nevertheless, Antiochos' birth appears to suit the folk motif well enough to exclude the minor dynastic differences. However, if we consider the relationship between Stratonike's father and Seleukos, we may be able to identify a reason for the hostility between wife and

109 See Stoneman 2012. For the transmission of these birth legends into Firdausi, see Davis 1996.

110 Grenet 2003.

111 The *Ahiqar* romance tradition (for which our earliest text comes from the excavations at Elephantine and dates to the 5th century BC) contains a similar story about the birth and the reintegration of an exiled child as well as a series of maxims. The story seems to have been known in Seleukid Babylon, see de Blois 1984, n. 12. For the transmission of this story into Greek prose fiction, see Marinčič 2003.

112 Stoneman 1992.

113 Stoneman 2012, 5–6.

114 See Hdt. 1.110–117.

husband which would fit better with the Ardashir narrative. It should be remembered, though, that the link between the Seleukid and the Antigonids was rarely emphasised publicly, whereas it is possible that Apama may have been transferred into the Achaimenid house in order to shore up Seleukid ancestry in precisely this way. Perhaps, then, the ‘original’ story concerned Apama, but the scandal of Stratonike’s marriages to both father and son and her strong personality as seen in the Borsippa Cylinder explain the gradual shift to the more dynastically problematic Stratonike. This would parallel the story in Lukian where there is not a clearly loving relationship between King and Queen, and the King fears the Queen’s sexual appetite. Which, in turn, causes problems for the King’s *philos*. From Kombabos’ actions, it seems apparent that the king’s jealousy and the queen’s inappropriate behaviour are certainly reason enough for fear. In the first case, we know of no evidence for either of the first two Seleukid queens to have attempted to remove their husband(s), but Stratonike’s connections to her father may have led to frictions between her and Seleukos.

V. STRATONIKE AND APHRODITE

One way in which Stratonike was usually presented was through a connection with the Goddess Aphrodite. This connection, it appears, also seems to have had some influence on the presentation of her as both an object of sexual desire through the lures of beauty and fertility as queen mother, but also as the embodiment of those qualities.¹¹⁵ We can find links to these desires in Stratonike’s cult title at Smyrna¹¹⁶ and perhaps in the way she is described in the Borsippa Cylinder.¹¹⁷

The cylinder was deposited by Antiochos on the occasion of the re-foundation of the temple of Nabû in Borsippa. One of its most interesting non-Babylonian features is the reference to Stratonike as queen. Her titles and the appearance of a woman in an inscription of this type appear to be unique in both the Babylonian and Persian tradition. Although Babylonian queens do appear in the inscriptions set up by their children, they only appear in the role of the queen mother.¹¹⁸ In these cases, the queen mother is referenced in order to stress the succession and stability of the kingdom.¹¹⁹ They do not appear as queen in their own right, nor do they appear paired with their husbands as Stratonike does in the Borsippa Cylinder. This unique reference to Stratonike may reflect her prominence as the granddaughter of Antipatros, the daughter of Phila and Demetrios Poliorketes as well as the wife to both Seleukos I and Antiochos I. Many of the stories surrounding Stratonike explicitly relate her marriage to Antiochos with the insurance of dynastic continuity and

115 The story concerning Stratonike’s pride in her hair, despite being bald, in Lukian’s *Pro Imaginibus* (5–6) suggests her extreme pride in her appearance.

116 *OGIS* 229

117 *BM* 36277 ii.26–27; Sherwin White 1991, 84.

118 See Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983, 22; Sherwin-White 1991, 83.

119 Sherwin-White 1991, 83–4.

stability,¹²⁰ in this way Stratonike may be seen to replicate the role of the Babylonian queen mother. These factors may have influenced the choice of her titles in the document, as Sherwin-White argued:

the specific choice of titles she bears in the cylinder: both *hīrtu* = ‘principal wife’ and *šarratu* = ‘queen’ are, in fact, limited in their use to designate female divinities in this period – a translation of ‘divine consort’ for the former and ‘heavenly queen’ for the latter might get close to rendering some of the nuances of meaning.¹²¹

It is for precisely this role as divine queen mother that Stratonike is honoured at Smyrna. In two decrees from the city she is defied in relation to her children: ‘The god Antiochos and the mother of his father the goddess Stratonike’.¹²² Both the Borsippa Cylinder and these decrees of Seleukos II, two generations later, stress the role of Stratonike as queen mother. This is an interesting contrast to how the courtesans and a wife of Demetrios were honoured, as none of these women who received a cult appear to have done so for their roles as mothers of legitimate children.¹²³ Neither did women in Ptolemaic cult at an early stage appear to receive worship for their role as the mother of the king, but rather for their role as royal consort.¹²⁴ Here it seems that the Seleukids differed from their Hellenistic rivals in promoting their wives and mothers as guarantors of dynastic stability in cultic terms.

It is not only the Stratonike in the role of queen mother that can be seen in the Borsippa Cylinder. P. Kosmin has recently argued that the translation of Stratonike’s name into Akkadian, Aštartanikku, is built of two parts; the word for fornicating and the name of the Goddess Aštarte.¹²⁵ Thus he translates her name as ‘Aštarte-fornicating’ rather than just as an attempt to transliterate the name into Akkadian. Aštarte was originally a Syrian goddess whose Babylonian equivalent was Ishtar, and both goddesses were most commonly associated with the Greek goddess Aphrodite and were often royal consorts.¹²⁶ We can therefore assert that an identification of Stratonike with the goddess of love and sex, which is expressed in Greek framework, is also present in the Akkadian.

It is precisely this assimilation of Aphrodite to Stratonike that we find in her cult at Smyrna. By the reign of her grandson, Seleukos II, a shrine was dedicated to her in the city.¹²⁷ The cult of Stratonike at Smyrna was most likely tied to her ben-

120 See Ogden 1999, 121–4.

121 Sherwin-White 1991, 84.

122 θεὸν Ἀντίοχον καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς θεὰν Στρατονίκην; *OGIS* 228, 229; *SIG* 575, 990.

123 Ath. 253a–253b.

124 Nor is the deification of Phila, Stratonike’s mother, connected to her role as royal mother. Rather, she appears so honoured by ‘flatterers’ of Demetrios with the same titles as the courtesan Lamia: Ath. 254a. 105; Ath. 255c.

125 Kosmin 2014b, 187.

126 This assimilation between the queen and Aphrodite would fit into a long Near Eastern tradition of Aphrodite (or deity whom the Greeks identified as Aphrodite) as consort of the king, see Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan 2008, 499.

127 *OGIS* 228, 1–4: ἐπεὶ βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος βασιλέως / Ἀντίοχου ἀποστείλας γράμματα ποτὶ τὰν πόλιν ἄξιοι τὸ τε ἱερὸν τὸ τὰς Ἀφροδίτας τὰς Στρατονικίδος καὶ τὰν πόλιν τῶν

efactions to the city itself.¹²⁸ Not only is the parallel with the Borsippa Cylinder striking, but the association with Aphrodite is interesting, because it recalls the manner in which her father's courtesans and wife were honoured with cults associated with Aphrodite, as were many of the Ptolemaic queens when they received divine honours, as did Laodike the wife of Antiochos III.¹²⁹ A comparison of this cult with those of Demetrios' courtesans and Ptolemaic queens, while quite interesting, would exceed the limitations of this paper, but it is nevertheless clear that royal women in the early Hellenistic period were often associated with Aphrodite.¹³⁰ The cultic honours which Stratonike received at Smyrna appear to be typical of these Aphrodite pairings; just as Berenike and Arsinoë II¹³¹ she was referred to as a goddess by her own name¹³² and as a pair with Aphrodite.¹³³ Seleukos II's support for his grandmother's sanctuary in Smyrna as holy and inviolable, as attested in his letter to Delphi, raises the question whether the goddess Stratonike was worshipped in a central dynastic cult, or whether her deification was specific to Smyrna. However, the parallels with the Borsippa Cylinder title, her association with marriage and sex in Hellenistic stories, and the use a similar pairing for other queens suggest a wider publication of her association with Aphrodite. It is clear from these two examples that Stratonike's significance relies on her role as sexual partner and thus mother,¹³⁴ a role that is also reflected in the tales of her sexuality in the literary tradition.

Now let us return to the story in Lukian. How should we connect Stratonike with the goddesses who provide the impetus in the other versions of these narratives? It may be possible to make the same connection that was made in Babylon and Smyrna, namely with the goddess of love. This is not without difficulties though, since the goddess of the temple which Stratonike was sent to build is identified as Hera by Lukian. In his narrative, there are two levels of causation for

Σμυρναίων / ἱερὰν καὶ ἄσυλον εἶμεν (*Since King Seleukos son of King Antiochos sent a letter to the city concerning the worthiness of the temple of Aphrodite Stratonike and the city of Smyrna to be holy and inviolable*).

128 OGIS 228, 1–4, 10–2.

129 Ath. 253a–b. See Ogden 2009 for the courtesans; for Ptolemaic queens: Berenike, wife of Ptolemy Soter, is deified by Aphrodite (Theokr. *Id.* 17.50–3; also 15.106–8) there is also evidence of a joint shrine for Aphrodite-Berenike in the Fayum *PEnteux.* 13; Rowlandson 1998, 28–30. Berenike II, wife of Ptolemy III, dedicates her famous lock of hair (Kallim. *Aetia* 4: *Coma Berenices*; Catullus 66) at a temple of Arsinoë-Aphrodite, and is herself then connected with the god. See Gutzwiller 1992 and Clayman 2013, 97–104 for Berenike's connection with Aphrodite. The association between Seleukid royal women and Aphrodite is not exclusive to Stratonike either; Laodike, wife of Antiochos III, was honoured as Aphrodite-Laodike in Teos (*SEG* 41.1003).

130 Carney 1994a provides a useful overview of the status of these women.

131 See Hunter 2003, 136–7 and above.

132 OGIS 229.9: θεὸν Ἀντίοχον καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς θεὰν Στρατονικήν.

133 OGIS 229.12: τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Στρατονικίδος Ἀφροδίτης.

134 This fits well with Carney's argument that the cults for these women were rooted in a desire for access to power (Carney 2000), a queen's power rested, in large part, in her ability to bear legitimate children, cf. Mirón Pérez 1996.

Kombabos' self-castration, the earthly political one (he fears he will be accused by the king) and the heavenly one:

Those in Hierapolis say that Hera was the willing cause of these matters, she knew full well that Kombabos was an upright man, but she wished to wreak her wrath on Stratonike for her unwillingness to undertake the building of the temple.

While this passage does not equate Stratonike with the goddess, Lukian nearly does so in chapter 26 by telling that 'others give a divine interpretation to this matter, saying that Hera, being in love with Kombabos, suggested the act of emasculation to many men'. Here the pursuit of Kombabos by Stratonike in the mortal realm is paralleled by the pursuit of him by 'Hera' in the immortal sphere. Who is the goddess that Lukian calls 'Hera'? The temple under construction is usually considered to be that of Atargatis, a goddess who is often associated with Astarte/Ishtar. We can see parallels with the Ugartitic Aqhat epic, as suggested by W.F. Albright. According to the latter, Aqhat

aroused the passionate desire of the goddess Anath, because of his strength and beauty. Like Bitis and Joseph in Egypt, like Eshmun and Kombabos in Syria, like Gilgamesh in Babylonia, the chaste hero spurns the advances of the goddess of love and war. A more characteristic specimen of Near-Eastern mythology would be hard to find.¹³⁵

We can now understand how Stratonike begins to be established in the role of a traditional Near Eastern goddess, similar to the presentation of Attis/Kybele or Adonis/Aphrodite pairings,¹³⁶ a role that is already familiar from her representation in the Borsippa Cylinder.

Perhaps then, it is in light of the similarities between Aphrodite and Stratonike that we should attempt to understand the painting by Ktesikles which depicted her with a fisherman:

Ktesilochos, a student of Apelles, was famous for a burlesque picture depicting Jupiter with a mitra on his head giving birth to Liber, moaning amongst the goddesses of childbirth; Kleon for his Kadmos; and Ktesidemos, for his Storming of Oechaliae and his Laodamia; Ktesikles for the insult which he offered to Queen Stratonike. For, when he did not receive the expected honours from her, he painted her, romping with a fisherman, with whom, according to common rumour, she had fallen in love. After exhibiting this picture in the harbour at Ephesos, he at once set sail and escaped: the queen, however, would not allow of its removal, the likenesses of the two figures being so admirably expressed.¹³⁷

135 Albright 1944, 34; Oden 1977, 38.

136 Stratonike would take on the role of the goddess in these pairings with her paramour taking the role of Adonis/Attis. Cf. Anagnostou-Laoutides and Konstan 2008 for a similar parallel in Theokr. *Id.* 1.

137 Plin. *NH* 35.140: *Ctesilochus, Apellis discipulus, petulanti pictura innotuit, love Liberum par-turiente depicto mitrato et muliebriter ingemescente inter obstetricia dearum, Cleon Cadmo, Ctesidemos Oechaliae expugnatione, Laodamia, Ctesicles reginae Stratonices iniuria. nullo enim honore exceptus ab ea pinxit volutantem cum piscatore, quem reginam amare sermo erat, eamque tabulam in portu Ephesi proposuit, ipse velis raptus. regina tolli vetuit, utriusque similitudine mire expressa. Cratinus comoedos Athenis in pompeo pinxit; Eutychedes bigam: regit Victoria.*

Kosmin has argued that we should read this narrative as “a misunderstanding of a cult painting that depicted the queen as Aphrodite and perhaps attempted to project Seleucid maritime sovereignty”.¹³⁸ While this does not fit Pliny’s version of the painting exactly, such an interpretation would help us explain Stratonike’s refusal to have the picture removed, if we understand that the painting depicted herself as – or on par with – Aphrodite. This blurring of boundaries between mortals and immortals in paintings, recalls similar literary descriptions of Hellenistic paintings.¹³⁹ Even if we do not accept Kosmin’s suggested link to maritime sovereignty, we need not necessarily reject the link to Aphrodite, who has an important association with fishermen in addition to her other maritime roles.¹⁴⁰

VI. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, there are several literary narratives that arose about the first two Seleukid queens, hitherto all of which have been assigned to Stratonike during her marriage to Seleukos. While this may be the case for some (parts) of the stories, it seems unlikely that it is true for all of them. As our literary narratives come from later sources which may rely on now invisible contemporary material, it is quite possible that we have the conflation of a variety of different stories that were in circulation during the early Hellenistic period and were applied to one or both of the women. Before attempting to untangle the web of interpretations woven above, it may be useful to summarise what connections we have thus far drawn.

The most popular story recorded about either of the two women is the love story which features the intervention of the wise doctor, recorded in Plutarch, Appian, Valerius Maximus and Lukian. The second story in Lukian concerns the foundation myth for the castrated priests at Hierapolis/Bambyke. The final story is a marriage/birth myth of the Kyros type recorded in the *Shahnameh* for Shapur. All three of these stories share elements that are common to other literary traditions in the Near East and Iran. The question now arises to which of the two women the traditions should be connected originally.

The story preserved in Firdausi has the strongest references to the Achaimenid court and with the Iranian nobility. The popularity of this story type in Iran is clearly shown by the birth myth of Kyros.¹⁴¹ If the myth also shares remnants of a similar Seleukid legend, we should probably connect it with the Iranian elements in the Seleukid dynasty. If a similar story circulated in the Iranian parts of the empire, then it would make sense to highlight the Iranian heritage of Antiochos. In this case we would identify the king with Seleukos and his wife with Apama, who in the story was probably connected to the royal Achaimenid house. As Apama’s only appear-

138 Kosmin 2014b, 186.

139 We can see the play between differing immortals in the opening of Achilles Tatios’ *Leukippe and Kleitophon* 1.1–2.

140 See Lytle 2006, 76 n. 98 on her association with fishermen; Demetriou 2003 for Aphrodite’s seafaring connotations in Hellenistic cult and epigram.

141 As we see in Hdt. 1.110–7.

ances in our sources portray her and her husband as jointly interested in the survival of the new house, it would be odd to see the negative portrayal present in the Ardashir story as suggesting that the motif would have circulated in the Seleukid court in a different manner. While the criteria for connecting this type of birth myth with the Apama-Seleukos pairing is largely based on her connections to the region and her potential for acting as a bridge between Iranian/Baktrian populations and the new Seleukid rulers, it is important to note that Stratonike spends over a decade in the east as queen. In this period, her perception as an outsider may have aroused some similar hostility to that which was raised against Shapur's mother in Firdausi.

The Lukianic story connected with the temple of the Syrian Goddess shares many of the same problems. On the one hand, Stratonike has an epigraphic connection to the site which Apama lacks. On the other hand, the five-year marriage between Stratonike and Seleukos gives little time for all of the attested activities: the birth of at least one child, with enough time spent supervising the building of the temple with Kombabos to pursue him, and then to be pursued by Antiochos long enough for him to fall seriously ill. If the story is not just a generic type which could have applied to any Near Eastern temple, but should be connected to the temple at Hierapolis, then we can raise similar objections concerning Apama's potential to be involved with the sanctuary. While the period of her marriage to Seleukos was much longer, her time in Syria was relatively limited, confined, it seems, to the years between Seleukos taking control of the region in 301 and Apama's death in 299. One solution to the chronological problems between the two Lukianic narratives under discussion, the marriage and the castration stories, is to break the temporal links between the two and consider them as separate popular traditions. If we suppose that Antiochos is the king whose wife may be unfaithful, then we are not left with a similar chronological problem.

Stratonike was most likely present in the western Seleukid Empire from her husband's return from the east in 281 until her death in 253. This leaves at least twenty years for her to have founded the temple. Furthermore, while we have evidence for Antiochos' love for Stratonike, the same cannot be said to be true the other way round. It is clear from Plutarch's and Appian's versions of the wedding story that Stratonike had to be convinced to change husbands. While the significance of the forced change of husbands onto Stratonike may be to highlight her devotion to her (first) husband, it may also expose a real unwillingness to become the wife of Antiochos. However, the loyalty to her husband may have also been used to counteract any suspicion of a lack of chastity between her and Antiochos, just as his willingness to sacrifice himself rather than wrong his father does the same. To this end, if we take the painting reported in Pliny at face value, then we begin to have a pattern of Stratonike as a version of Aphrodite within the Seleukid court, able to conduct her own romantic relationships but also loyal to her husband(s).

Obviously, the first two Seleukid Queens, Apama and Stratonike, played a pivotal role in the development of a Seleukid dynastic mythology which drew heavily on Near Eastern and Iranian narrative traditions. The multiplicity of possible interpretations for these stories suggests that proposing a single origin would be ineffec-

tive, and that a different method of interpretation would be more productive. It seems thus much better to examine these narratives in the context of other popular stories and legends that developed around the same time. Indeed, these types of stories may have several different analytical grids, and their numerous inner contradictions are not surprising, as they may have been generated from generations of collective retellings and consequently often lack a coherent logic. However, the different narratives related to Apama and Stratonike all clearly tie into at least two well-known folklore traditions – the birth of royal offspring, and marriage into a royal house.¹⁴² The queens' appearance in these traditions demonstrates the importance that the Seleukids and their subjects attached to the creation of dynastic legitimacy and continuity. Hence, the possible different analyses which have been sketched above all show how the traditions about the early Seleukids could have been mapped onto underlying popular narratives. This in turn would have more firmly established the dynasty within their territories as they took part in the traditional tales – a melding of cultural traditions, 'Greco-Macedonian' and 'Oriental', which was not accidental, but the result of a deliberate attempt to construct a new multi-ethnic empire.

142 West 2007, 414–7. It is interesting to note that a more developed heroic legend pattern does not seem to have developed about the early Seleukids (West 2007, 427–8), despite the fact that stories about the Seleukids became integrated into the Near-Eastern story-telling web. In particular, there are none of the more fantastic elements, such as the search for the water of life, flying, or paradise. The only heroic motif is Seleukos' birth from Apollo. For Alexander legends as 'Hero' stories see, Anderson 2012.

SELEUKID LOVE AND POWER: STRATONIKE I

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ABSTRACT

The most remarkable event linked with Stratonike I is the love story which involved Antiochos I, the son of Seleukos I. His infatuation with his stepmother Stratonike led to a dramatic turn of events: Seleukos gave up Stratonike, annulled his marriage and wed her to his son in a ceremony which pronounced them both king and queen of upper Asia (294/3 BC). This paper deals with this colorful episode under three headings which portray it as a political allegory of the Seleukid kingdom: (1) the context of the act within the Seleukid political framework, including a proposal of some possible precedents from the Achaimenid kingdom; (2) an attempt to reconstruct the 'official version' of the tale propagated by Seleukos and its justification; (3) an analysis of the literary sources which embellish this tale (in particular, Plutarch, *Demetrios* 38; Appian, *Syriaca*, 59–61; [Lucian], *De dea Syria* 17–19). The three sections are respectively entitled 'power', 'propaganda' and 'passion'. It is the contention of this paper that the historical or political treatment of the affair and the literary analysis of its depictions cannot be separated from each other.

The story of the love and lust of Antiochos for Stratonike and the consequent decision of Seleukos to break his own diplomatic marriage and hand his wife to his own son are well known. Continually retold in antiquity,¹ they have also captured the imagination of future generations.² In the original version, the role attributed to Stratonike was presumably minimal. This seems to be part of the reason why the story was embroidered and expanded in order to give Stratonike a more significant place. In this chapter I would like to present the deed as indicative of the policy of the Seleukid house and of the way it was in turn perceived by others on the international scene. There are three parts to the argument, corresponding to the various layers of the act: (1) the context of the act within the Seleukid political framework, in which I will trace some possible precedents; (2) an attempt to reconstruct the

* I would like to thank Hans Beck, Altay Coşkun and Alex McAuley for their invitation and for the wonderful and inspiring gathering.

1 The main sources are Val. Max. 5.7.ext.1 (under *De parentum amore et indulgentia in liberos*); Plut. *Demetr.* 38; App. *Syr.* 59–61; [Lucian], *De dea Syria* 17–19; Lucian, *Icaromenippus*, 15; Julian, *Misopogon* 60–4 (347a–348b). Cf. Suda, s.vv. Ἐρασίστρατος; Ἐξ ἔρωτος; Σέλευκος. Cf. Syncell. *Ecl. Chron.* 520 (p. 330.13–17 Mosshammer).

2 See Petrarca, *Trionfi*, vv. 109–26 (mid 14th century); Brosse, *Stratonike, ou Le malade d'amour* (1647); Philippe Quinault, *Stratonike* (1660); Thomas Corneille, *Antiochos* (1666); François-Benoît Hoffman, Etienne Nicolas Méhul, *Stratonike, comédie héroïque en un acte et en vers* (1792). See the famous paintings of Jacques-Louis David, *Érasistrate découvrant la cause de la maladie d'Antiochus dans son amour pour Stratonike* (1774), or Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Maladie d'Antiochos / Antiochos et Stratonike* (1840). See Shelton 2005, 54–86 on the last painting. See Stechow 1945.

possible official version propagated by Seleukos in order to justify his manoeuvre; (3) an analysis of the literary sources which contributed to embellishing this tale. The three parts can respectively be seen as ‘power’, ‘propaganda’ and ‘passion’.

This division into the ‘historical/political’ and ‘literary’ sections is purely methodological, as the two sides of the story are closely intertwined and cannot ever be fully separated from each other. The description of this instance of royal lust and love was indeed a favourite topic of Hellenistic historiographers, who were fascinated by the fluidity and vagueness of the distinction between the private and public realms. This fact makes it hard for us to differentiate between the literary or the sensationalist, and the historical or real. The last section of this chapter will show how the love story and passionate affair assumed a distinctively Seleukid character among later authors.

I. POWER

Let us begin with the deed itself: in 294/3 BC Seleukos Nikator announced his divorce from Stratonike and her betrothal to his son, Antiochos. This announcement went along with a declaration that he would delegate new responsibilities to the prince, as Antiochos and his new wife were to be moved to the eastern part of the realm, and thus to share power with Seleukos (Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Appian, [Lucian], Julian). Some of our sources only mention the new official titles and the sharing of power: Memnon of Herakleia (*FGrH* 434 F 8.1, *apud* Photios) merely claims that ‘Seleukos had seventy-two satraps under him, so extensive was the territory over which he ruled. The greater part he had transferred to his son, but he continued to reign over the country which lies between the Euphrates and the sea’.³ This sharing of power, or co-regency, finds corroboration in the epigraphic evidence.⁴ Yet most of our literary sources associate this division of power with the prince’s marriage to Stratonike. It will be argued here that this association is hardly coincidental.

The historicity of this event has been doubted by several scholars for four main reasons.⁵ First, the story itself is very similar to one of the familiar stock situations of the rhetorical schools, namely, the demented father who lets his son have his

3 Σέλευκος ... τοῦ βίου τὸ λείπον διανύσαι γηραιὸς ἤδη ὢν, διανοούμενος τὴν δὲ Ἀσίαν Ἀντιόχῳ παραθέσθαι τῷ παιδί. Cf. App. *Syr.* 62: Σατραπείαι δὲ ἦσαν ὑπ’ αὐτῷ δύο καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα: τοσαύτης ἐβασίλευε γῆς. καὶ τὴν πλείονα τῷ παιδί παραδούς, ἤρχε τῶν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἐπὶ Εὐφράτην μόνων.

4 Cf. *BM* 109941 1.VIII.18 SEB (294 BC); Oelsner 1986, 271. Cf. Assar 2003, 185 n. 15: Seleukos and Antiochos. See the evidence for the period from 20 SEB (20.IX.20; cf. Clay, 1913, pl. 2, n. 3) to 30 SE (Sachs & Hunger 1988, 308–13 no. 281B; Parker & Dubberstein 1946, 19). Cf. Finkel and van der Spek, forthcoming: DUMU LUGAL šá É UŠ-tum, mār šarri ša bīt ridūti (‘crown prince’; ‘the son of the king of the succession house’).

5 Mesk 1913, 386–8.; Rhode 1876, 55–9; Brodersen 1985, 459–69; Zadorojnyi 1999, 516. Cf. Grainger 1990b, 49, who accepts the story as true and uses it to date the foundation of Apamea (299–301 BC).

wife.⁶ Second, this is also a *topos* found in the Greek novel.⁷ Third, similar stories have been attributed to other persons in antiquity, in particular to Hippokrates at the court of Perdikkas.⁸ Fourth, the physician Erasistratos has an important part in the story in disclosing the passion of Antiochos to king Seleukos; however, in all probability, Erasistratos was born around 310–300 BC,⁹ and thus was presumably too young to be in Seleukos' court at all, let alone to have been in such an influential position.¹⁰

While being aware that I cannot do full justice to our sources, I shall nevertheless try to differentiate the passionate love-story element from the deed itself in my analysis, and to show the possible historicity of the act by isolating some of its components.

The sharing of power in the Seleukid kingdom is attested from 294/3 onwards. Accordingly, we know of a system of shared power, whether intentionally – as between Seleukos I and Antiochos I, Antiochos I and Antiochos II, Antiochos III and his son Antiochos (joint kings in 210–193 BC), Antiochos III and Seleukos IV, Antiochos IV and Antiochos V – or unintentionally, as the conceded independent rule of Antiochos Hierax during the reign of Seleukos II. It is one of the hallmarks of the Seleukid government that, within this vast area, authority was ideally split between two reigning figures: either father and son, or two brothers. The Seleukid division of power was fundamentally necessary not least because the empire had several distinct centres in the west and in the east,¹¹ two hearts, as it were: one directed at the Greek and Macedonian world, and the other directed at the eastern parts of the former regime (in particular Baktria) but which also comprised its previous core of Persia and Media. The Seleukid kingdom had this dual character from

6 Sen. *Controversiae* 6.7: *Demens qui filio cessit uxorem* ('The madman who let his son have his wife'): *Alter ex adulescentibus cum aegrotaret et in ultimis esset, medici dixerunt animi vitium esse*; [Quintil.], *Decl.* 291, 335; Aristainetos *Epist.* 1.13.

7 Cf. Heliod. *Aeth.* 4.7.

8 Galen, *Opt. met. Philos.* I, p. 58, Kühn; [Soranus], *Vita Hipp.* 5.

9 Erasistratos: Wellmann 1900, 380; Kirchner 1909, 333; cf. Euseb. *Chr.* 2.120–1 [*floruit* in Ol. 130.4 (= 258/7 BC)]. *Contra* Synkell. *Chronographia* I p. 520 Dindorf. Val. Max. 5.7.ext.1: *Leptinis mathematici, vel, ut quidam tradunt, Erasistrati medici providentia* ('... by the care of Leptines the mathematician, or, as some claim, by that of Erasistratos the physician'). Kleombrotos (father of Erasistratos): Pliny, *NH* 7.37.123: *eandem scientiam in Cleombroto Ceo Ptolemaeus rex Megalensibus sacris donavit centum talentis servato Antiocho rege* (King Ptolemy rewarded a similar degree of skill in the person of Kleombrotos of Keos, by a donation of one hundred talents, at the Megalensian games, having succeeded in saving the life of King Antiochos). Cf. Plin. *NH* 29.3.5: *Horum placita Chrysippus ingenti garrulitate mutavit, plurimumque et ex Chrysippo discipulus eius Erasistratus, Aristotelis filia genitus. Hic Antiocho rege sanato centum talentis donatus est a rege Ptolemaeo filio eius, ut incipiamus et praemia artis ostendere* ('In the rules laid down by these professors, changes were effected by Chrysippos with a vast parade of words, and, after Chrysippos, by Erasistratos, son of the daughter of Aristotle. For the cure of King Antiochos – to give our first illustration of the profits realized by the medical art – Erasistratos received from his son, King Ptolemy, the sum of one hundred talents'). Cf. von Staden 1989, 47 for a contrary opinion.

10 See some scholars who support the historicity of this story: Fraser 1969; Lloyd 1975, 172–175.

11 Thus, Sardis, Seleukeia/Antiocheia, Babylon, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Susa were known centers.

its beginning (up to the mid-second century) and had to split its energies, arms and resources between east and west.¹² Of course, against this background, it would appear that Seleukos' decision to share authority makes much better sense. It also marked Antiochos as the heir apparent without any competition.

This is where Stratonike came to play an important role. A political alliance between Seleukos and the Antigonids of Macedon was crucial in order to legitimize the tenability of the kingdom of the east. One of the principal functions of these political alliances was a declaration attesting to the mutual recognition of the legitimacy of the two political entities, as parties to the marriage.¹³ Seleukos' marriage to the daughter of Demetrios was needed when Seleukos was relatively weak, especially in the face of the alliance between Lysimachos and Ptolemy, and was designed to protect him from a western threat.¹⁴ Within a decade, the threat from Demetrios increased. While not completely breaking the alliance with the Antigonids, Seleukos was able to transfer Stratonike further to the east, in an action that ensured the future of his own kingdom, and lent legitimacy to the Seleukid claim over the eastern parts.

Thus, the transfer of Stratonike by Seleukos to his son Antiochos was a clever political manoeuvre, and one that was necessitated by certain realities of the Seleukid kingdom: its dual character, its crucial positioning between east and west, the wish to secure this political entity against any threat coming from the west, and the desire to legitimize its eastward extent in the eyes of Macedonian and Greek public view (especially the opinion of the soldiers). Bearing in mind the unstable character of the Macedonian monarchical tradition, which often deteriorated into disarray and competition among successors, Seleukos' move was a clear break from the past, and signaled that a new form of government and succession could be simultaneously secured. We can fit this rationale together with the piece of evidence concerning the marriage of Antiochos and Stratonike¹⁵ to perceive this act as a creative cure to the notorious conflicts over internal succession known to have plagued Macedonian history in the Argead line.¹⁶ In other words, the act of transferring

12 See Sherwin-White 1987, 17–18. See Invernizzi 1993, 231–42.

13 On marriage alliances see Carney 1994a, 19–20; see Seibert 1967, 122–7.

14 On this marriage see Plut. *Demetr.* 31, 32; see Grainger 1997, 55, 67; Ogden 1999, 121–4; Carney 1994a, 171–2. See the chapter of Engels and Erickson in this volume for a detailed political analysis of events after Ipsos.

15 Stratonike as queen (and 'sister') of Antiochos: 'Ilian decree', 268 BC (*CIG* 3595 = *OGIS* 219), line 22: '... the arrival [of the king] and of his sister the Queen and of his friends ... has been (for the best)...' (γεγονέναι <επ' ἀπαθῶ> τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλίσσης καὶ τῶν φίλων ...; Jones 1993, 85. Cf. Sachs & Hunger 1988, 345, ll. 34, 29. [year 274/3 BC]. Cf. Macurdy 1932, 79–82. An indirect piece of evidence is the age of Phila, the descendant of Seleukos and Stratonike, as implied by her marriage with Antigonos II Gonatas around 276 BC: Tarn 1913, 174, 226–7. Plutarch (*Demetr.* 38.2) has Stratonike as 'already a mother of a little child by Seleukos' (ἤδη δὲ παιδίον ἐχούσης ἐκ τοῦ Σελεύκου), presumably Phila (cf. LSJ s.v. παιδίον, but purposely left ambiguous so as to match 19.3 [Demetrios as child of Antigonos]).

16 Another instance would be the marriage of Ptolemy II with his sister Arsinoe (274 BC), just as shocking to the Greek world: Paus. 1.7.1, Athen. 14.621a; schol. ad. Theoc. *Id.* 17.128. Cf. Burstein 1982, 197–212; Carney 1987.

Stratonike from father to son paralleled, or virtually spelled, the sharing of *impe-rium* between father and son as two joint rulers.¹⁷

Seleukos' act was unprecedented for the Greek-speaking world. But was this also the case for the eastern subjects of the kingdom? I would suggest that our Greek sources may describe a similar practice, in some rudimentary form, within the Achaimenid Kingdom; a practice which was perhaps needed for the same reasons, particularly the vastness of the territory. There are two (or maybe three) possible allusions to this practice.

(1) The first case is found in Plutarch's *Life of Artaxerxes*, chapters 26–27. It is a dramatic love story with novelistic features, relating the wish of the heir apparent, prince Dareios, to have one of his father's concubines, a Greek mistress called Aspasia (named thus by Kyros the Younger after the well known hetaira of Perikles). On the occasion when Dareios is designated heir, he expresses his desire to have Aspasia as his consort.¹⁸ Since, so the story goes, it is customary to fulfill any request from the crown prince, the Persian king Artaxerxes reluctantly agrees, but then changes his mind.¹⁹ This reversal would lead to Dareios' revolt with lethal re-

17 It is surely no accident, that in Julian's version, *Misopogon* 60–64 (347a–348b), Stratonike weds Antiochos after Seleukos' death: 'they say then that out of excessive softness and luxury the latter was constantly falling in love and being loved, and finally he conceived a dishonourable passion for his own stepmother. And though he wished to conceal his condition he could not ... Then Erasistratos saw what ailed him and told the king, and he out of love for his son said that he would give up his wife to him. Now the youth for the moment refused; but when his father died not long after, he sought with the greatest vehemence the favour which he had so honourably refused when it was first offered to him' (Translations of the Greek texts are those of the LCL series; φασι δι' ὑπερβολὴν ἀβρότητος καὶ τρυφῆς ἐρώντα ἀεὶ καὶ ἐρώμενον τέλος ἄδικον ἔρωτα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μητρὸς ἐρασθῆναι: κρύπτειν δ' ἐθέλοντα τὸ πάθος οὐ δύνασθαι ... συνιδὼν δὲ τὸ πάθος ὁ Ἐρασίστρατος φράζει πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, καὶ ὅς ὑπὸ τοῦ φιλόπαις εἶναι παραχωρεῖν ἔφη τῷ παιδί τῆς γαμετῆς. ὁ δὲ αὐτίκα μὲν ἠρνήσατο: τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς μικρὸν ὕστερον, ἦν πρότερον διδομένην αὐτῷ χάριν εὐγενῶς ἠρνήθη, μάλα κραταιῶς μετεδῶξεν). The Roman Emperor found it hard to believe the act was done while Seleukos was still alive. It should be remembered that Julian himself accepted no division of the Roman imperium between two Augusti of East and west during his brief reign. Thus, it might be said that even Julian could see that sharing Stratonike was linked somehow to some form of sharing of power, which he did his utmost to avoid.

18 Plut. *Art.* 26.1–5: 'Artaxerxes ... proclaimed Dareios, then fifty years of age, his successor to the throne ... Now, there was a custom among the Persians that the one appointed to the royal succession should ask a boon, and that the one who appointed him should give whatever was asked, if it was within his power. Accordingly, Dareios asked for Aspasia, who had been the special favourite of Kyros, and was then a concubine of the king ...' (Ὁ δ' Ἀρτοξέρξης ... ἀνέδειξε τὸν Δαρεῖον βασιλέα πεντηχοστὸν ἔτος γεγονότα ... νόμου δ' ὄντος ἐν Πέρσας δωρεὰν αἰτεῖν τὸν ἀναδειχθέντα, καὶ διδόναι τὸν ἀναδείξαντα πᾶν τὸ αἰτηθὲν ἄνπερ ἢ δυνατόν, ἤτησεν Ἀσπασίαν ὁ Δαρεῖος τὴν μάλιστα σπουδασθεῖσαν ὑπὸ Κύρου, τότε δὲ τῷ βασιλεὶ παλλακευομένην).

19 Plut. *Art.* 27.1–5: 'This was the woman for whom Dareios asked, and he gave offence thereby to his father; for the Barbarian folk are terribly jealous in all that pertains to the pleasures of love ... However, since he had been asked for Aspasia, he said that she was a free woman, and bade his son take her if she was willing, but not to constrain her against her wishes. So Aspasia was summoned, and contrary to the hopes of the king, chose Dareios. And the king gave her to

sults for the prince, also affecting the health of the king (chapters 28–30). What is of importance here, beneath the Greek coloring and the unique features of the story, is the combination of sharing royal powers and passing on a woman of the king's harem to the new appointee. Note that in Justin's version of the same story, which was derived from the same source, Aspasia is described as Artaxerxes' wife.²⁰ This story presumably (in any case, ultimately) comes from Deinon, one of the authors of the *Persika* genre, which flourished in the 4th century BC.²¹ The story has elements of passion and love which can be controlled neither by the son Dareios nor

Dareios under constraint of the custom that prevailed, but a little while after he had given her, he took her away again ... The resentment of Dareios, however, knew no bounds, either because he was deeply stirred by his passion for Aspasia, or because he thought that he had been insulted and mocked by his father' (Ταύτην ὁ Δαρεῖος αἰτήσας, ἠνίασε τὸν πατέρα· δῶς ζήλα γὰρ τὰ βαρβαρικά δεινῶς περὶ τὸ ἀκόλαστον ... αἰτήθεις ἐκείνην ἐλευθέραν ἔφησεν εἶναι, καὶ λαμβάνειν ἐκέλευσε βουλομένην, ἄκουσαν δὲ μὴ βιάζεσθαι. μεταπεμφθείσης δὲ τῆς Ἀσπασίας, καὶ παρ' ἐλπίδας τοῦ βασιλέως ἐλομένης τὸν Δαρεῖον, ἔδωκε μὲν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης τοῦ νόμου, δοῦς δ' ὀλίγον ὕστερον ἀφείλετο ... ὁ δ' ἠγεγενεν οὐ μετρίως, εἴτ' ἔρωτι τῆς Ἀσπασίας περιπαθῆς γεγὼνός, εἴθ' ὑβρίσθαι καὶ κεχλεύασθαι νομίζων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς).

- 20 Just. 10.1.1-2.3: 'Artaxerxes ... made Dareios king during his own lifetime, contrary to the usage of the Persians, among whom the king is changed only by death; for he thought nothing taken from himself that he conferred upon his son, and expected greater enjoyment from having progeny, if he saw the insignia of royalty adorning his son while he lived. But Dareios, after such an extraordinary proof of his father's affection, conceived the design of killing him ... The cause of the intended parricide was even more atrocious than the crime itself; for after Kyros had been killed in the war against his brother, of which mention has been previously made, Artaxerxes married Aspasia, the concubine of Kyros; and Dareios required that his father should resign her to him as he resigned the kingdom. Artaxerxes, out of fondness for his children, said at first that he would do so, but afterwards, because of a change of mind, plausibly to refuse what he had inconsiderately promised ...', (*Artaxerxi ... Darium contra morem Persarum, apud quos rex non nisi morte mutatur, per indulgentiam pater regem vivus fecit, nihil sibi ablatum existimans, quod in filium contulisset, sinceriusque gaudium ex procreatione capturus, si insignia maiestatis suae vivus in filio conspexisset. Sed Darius post nova paternae pietatis exempla interficiendi patris consilium cepit ... Causa parricidii sceleratior ipso parricidio fuit. Occiso quippe Cyro fraterno bello, cuius mentio supra habita est, Aspasian, paelicem eius, rex Artaxerxes in matrimonium receperat. Hanc patrem cedere sibi sicuti regnum Darius postulaverat; qui pro indulgentia sua in liberos primo facturum se dixerat, mox paenitentia ductus, ut honeste negaret quod temere promiserat ...*; trans. Rev. John Selby Watson, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853).
- 21 The assumption that this story comes from Deinon is based upon the role of Tiribazos in Dareios' conspiracy and its aftermath in *Artaxerxes* 30. See Smith 1881, 22, 25; Stevenson 1997, 36. Little is known of Deinon's writings, and even less of his life. Presumably he was the father of the popular historian Kleitarchos, if indeed this is the same person Pliny refers to in his *Historia Naturalis* (1.10: *Dione Colophonio*). This information, however, does not help us determine the dates of Deinon's life, as we cannot be certain of the date of Kleitarchos' writing. The prevailing view is that he lived at the end of the fourth century: see Hamilton 1961, Badian 1965. Some scholars favour a date after 280 BC: see Tam 1948, 5–29; Pearson 1960, 226 ff. Note Pliny's claim (*NH* 3.5.57) that Kleitarchos described Romans as reaching Alexander in Asia, a reference that seems far too early for an author of the fourth century – but again, this could be an interpolation in his text. If Deinon's book preceded Seleukos there is a possibility that the monarch could have been influenced by his work.

by the father Artaxerxes. As befits the common Greek stereotype of eastern barbarians, the unruly behaviour of these Persians is guided by emotions to the point of breaking laws, customs, and even familial order.²²

As is well known in the Ancient Near Eastern and Persian traditions, one of the signs that power had been transferred was the inheritance of the former ruler's harem by his successor.²³ Consorting with one of the royal women would have political significance and would even be tantamount to a rebellion if not properly authorized. Among the most famous is the biblical story of Adoniah (*1 Kings* 2.13–25): while acknowledging that he had lost the Israelite kingship, he only asked for David's famous concubine – a seemingly innocent request allegedly made out of love, which Solomon, however, understood as being politically charged.²⁴ Co-Regency, it seems, was not meant to see the light of day in the Israelite Kingdom. What is so special about the Persian, and apparently later the Seleukid act is that a royal woman was given to the crown prince while the king was still alive.

(2) The second potential case that could be considered as a precedent for Seleukos' decision is found in Herodotos (9.108–110). It is again a story involving love and passion that has often baffled scholars, not least because of certain awkward elements within it. Herodotos tells us of Xerxes' passion for the wife of his brother Masistes, a feeling that he was obliged to conceal. Eventually, Xerxes married his son Dareios to Masistes' daughter, but soon fell in love with her as well. So we have two different love triangles involving the king. Queen Amestris, upon learning of Xerxes' feelings (and betrayal: 9.109.2), curiously avenged Masistes' wife and not her daughter.²⁵ It seems that this garbled story in fact reflects a dupli-

22 See Hall 1989, 80 on the barbarians' 'immoderate luxuriousness and unrestrained emotionalism'. In Aristotle's classification (*Pol.* 7.1327b18–331), the barbarians of the north and the east are two extremes, between whom the Greeks are situated geographically and are also intermediate in character, advocating nothing in excess, and combine the good features of both types. On Barbarian *anomia* see Nikolaidis 1986, 234 n. 23; 235n. 28.

23 See, conversely, Lightfoot 2003, 379, on the fact that association with a father's wives or concubines was a way to destabilize his power.

24 *1 Kings* 2.22–25, esp. 22: King Solomon answered his mother, "Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him – after all, he is my older brother ..."

25 Hdt. 9.108: 'At that time, while [Xerxes] was in Sardis, he had a passionate desire, as it seems, for the wife of Masistes, who was also there: and as she could not be bent to his will by his messages to her, and he did not wish to employ force because he had regard for his brother Masistes and the same consideration withheld the woman also, for she well knew that force would not be used towards her), then Xerxes abstained from all else, and endeavoured to bring about the marriage of his own son Dareios with the daughter of this woman and of Masistes, supposing that if he should do so he would obtain her more easily. Then having made the betrothal and done all the customary rites ... then he ceased from attempting the wife of Masistes and changing his inclination he conceived a desire for the wife of Dareios, who was daughter of Masistes, and obtained her: now the name of this woman was Artaunte ... [110] And Amestris was informed ... and having learnt that which was being done, she was not angry with the woman, but supposing that her mother was the cause and that she was bringing this about, she planned destruction for the wife of Masistes' (τότε δὴ ἐν τῇσι Σάρδισι ἐὼν ἄρα ἦρα τῆς Μασίστew γυναικός, ἐούσης καὶ ταύτης ἐνθαῦτα. ὥς δὲ οἱ προσπέμποντι οὐκ ἐδύνατο κατεργασθῆναι, οὐδὲ βίην προσεφέρετο προμηθεόμενος τὸν ἀδελφεὸν Μασίστην·

cation of a basic narrative, and that it originally consisted of only a single love triangle. One should note that Masistes' wife appears nameless while her daughter is called Artaunte. Her name is suspiciously close to the commander Artautes, who has been mentioned just previously in Herodotos' account (9.102, 107) and slandered "worse than a woman" (γυναικὸς κακίω). The two love triangles bear surprising similarities, and they appear to be partially the product of the historian's invention, or rather the outcome of his confused attempt to combine two different versions of the same story.

What is important is that this story, taken along with a certain assumption made in previous scholarship, might be seen as indicating a precedent for Seleukos. The assumption is that the name Masistes seems to reflect Old Persian *mathišta*, 'the greatest', an adjective used by Xerxes in the royal inscription from Persepolis XPf (the so called 'harem inscription') to refer to the preferred position at court granted to him by his father Dareios.²⁶ Xerxes was the 'Mathishta' after his father, an appellation which could indicate an official title. Accordingly, a model of synarchy or power sharing at the Persian court would be implied.²⁷ If this is correct, Herodotos' Masistes might reflect a reference to Xerxes' own designated heir, so that some identity between Masistes and Dareios presumably was in the original version of the story.²⁸

Whatever we might think concerning the garbled account of Xerxes, Masistes and Dareios, we must acknowledge that there are two phases in the story: (a) Xerxes is in a relationship with a woman; (b) there is some sort of a relationship between Xerxes and the wife of his son Dareios. In the latter stage of the story, the king tries to persuade Masistes to give up his wife in return for another royal woman (an offer which Masistes refuses). The king giving a royal woman and then trying to get her back closely resembles the abovementioned story of Artaxerxes, Dareios and Aspasia. In both cases, we may be encountering, behind the façade of Persian folklore (which probably originated in Asia Minor) and Greek storytelling, an Achaimenid institution consisting of two elements: (a) a sharing of power, mostly

τὸν τὸν δὲ τοῦτο εἶχε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα· εὐ γὰρ ἐπίστατο βίης οὐ τευξομένη· ἐνθαῦτα δὴ Ξέρξης ἐργόμενος τῶν ἄλλων πρήσει τὸν γάμον τοῦτον τῷ παιδί τῷ ἑωυτοῦ Δαρείῳ, θυγατέρα τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης καὶ Μασίστῳ, δοκέων αὐτὴν μᾶλλον λάμψεσθαι ἢν ταῦτα ποιήσῃ. ἀρμόσας δὲ καὶ τὰ νομιζόμενα ποιήσας ... ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐκεῖ τε ἀπίκετο καὶ ἡγάγετο ἐς ἑωυτοῦ Δαρείῳ τὴν γυναῖκα, οὕτω δὴ τῆς Μασίστῳ μὲν γυναικὸς ἐπέπαυτο, ὁ δὲ διαμειψάμενος ἦρα τε καὶ ἐτύγχανε τῆς Δαρείου μὲν γυναικὸς Μασίστῳ δὲ θυγατρός· οὐνομα δὲ τῇ γυναικὶ ταύτῃ ἦν Ἀρταύνη ... [110] καὶ ἡ Ἀμυστρὶς πυνθάνεται μαθοῦσα δὲ τὸ ποιούμενον τῇ μὲν γυναικὶ ταύτῃ οὐκ εἶχε ἔγκοτον, ἥ δὲ ἐλπίζουσα τὴν μητέρα αὐτῆς εἶναι αἰτίην καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνην πρήσειν, τῇ Μασίστῳ γυναικὶ ἐβούλευε ὀλεθρον).

26 Lines 28–32: 'Dareios had other sons, but – thus was Ahuramazda's desire – my father Dareios made me the greatest [*mathišta*] after himself'.

27 See also Ariaramnes (in Baktria) during Xerxes' reign: Plut. *Mor.* 173b, 488d–f; cf. Justin 2.10.1–11. Cf. Calmeyer 1976; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1981, 48–50, 122–3. However, Briant 2002, 524 and Wieshofer 1996, 30, 53 have spoken out against the concept of synarchy.

28 Alternatively, this 'Masistes' could have been a conflation of two figures, one fighting in Boiotia (the son of Dareios, Hdt. 9.107), the other revolting against the king (9.112–13).

between king and son; (b) a transfer of a royal woman to the son (or heir) as a token of power sharing.

(3) A third possible text alluding to a similar situation is found in Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F9, *apud* Photios). In his summary, Photios states that Ktesias' version of Kyros' rise to power differs from that of Herodotos. While the latter regards Kyros as the son of Astyages' daughter Mandane, thus linking him directly to the royal line of the Medes as Astyages' grandson, Ktesias has Kyros marry into the Median dynasty through Amytis, the daughter of Astiygas. One curious passage is of relevance here: Photios claims that Kyros honored Astiygas like a father, and his daughter Amytis like a mother before marrying her.²⁹ This might be indicative of a similar constellation as in the cases previously discussed to shed light on the story of Antiochos and Stratonike. If so, it would seem like an attempt to import a Persian model and practice into a Median context, mainly as a ceremony to accompany, if not a means to legitimize, the transfer of power.

Admittedly the passages under scrutiny here are too muddled to permit any firm conclusions. As we have seen, the more emotional or colorful parts of the stories might be considered Greek additions intended to explain the strangeness of the bridal transfer in the Achaimenid dynastic practice, which was ideal fodder for Greek sensationalist and stereotyped expectations. They can be separated from the political and official dimensions of the act, and as the latter examples show, they are not necessarily part and parcel of the story. This leads us neatly to the next point: the propagandistic characteristics of the tale.

II. PROPAGANDA

We can treat the story of love in the case of Antiochos and Stratonike as rationale for a deed that was considered extremely unique by its contemporaries. Scholars have already suggested it was an instance of Seleukid propaganda.³⁰ Here some caution is needed, as we have to differentiate between the core description of the event itself and later embellishments in the Greek literary tradition. Accordingly, I would like to suggest that we should also distinguish between two layers in the case of Stratonike: the version authorized by Seleukos, and the later elaboration of the tale in historiography and other sensationalist or moralizing literary genres. It is

29 '... shortly after [Astiygas] was freed by Kyros and honored as a father. His daughter, Amytis, who for a while was honored like a mother by Kyros, finally became his wife ...' (... λυθῆναι δὲ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Κύρου μετ' οὐ πολὺ καὶ ὡς πατέρα τιμηθῆναι, καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα Ἀμύτιν πρότερον μὲν μητρικῆς ἀπολαύσαι τιμῆς, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ εἰς γυναῖκα ἀχθῆναι τῷ Κύρῳ ...).

30 See Breebaat 1967, 155: 'We could imagine, then, that the close connection between the two aspects is a product of royal propaganda, which was avidly taken up by interested historiographers ...'; 163: 'But there is a strong probability that the love-story was published and propagated in order to show Seleukos as the royal father who had magnanimously bowed to circumstances beyond him, and to take from the whole arrangement the odium that it mainly served political ends.']. For an assumption of propaganda for a different, non Greek, audience, see Funck 1974b, 1313–14; Erickson 2009, 120–1.

hard to believe that the Seleukid court would go to such lengths in describing the passions felt by Antiochos. This must have been the work of Hellenistic historiography, though presumably of writers still close to the affair, be they contemporary with or in the first generation after the bridal transfer.

The two elements in a reconstructed 'official' Seleukid version used to justify the deed may be deduced by analogy. The first is the component of emotions and the other, quite the opposite, is a factor of restraint. Seleukos seems to have employed a story of love and emotions, couched in Greek terminology and making use of Greek stereotypes. These emotions were allegedly felt by Antiochos towards Stratonike to explain his surprising move. As evidence for this we might consider the explanation Seleukos may have given to the fact that he did not divorce Apama, the Baktrian-Sogdian princess, while all the other Macedonian officers banished their Persian wives.³¹ The rationale must have been the affection he felt towards her, though one may surely suspect political motivation as well.³² Correspondingly, John Malalas, admittedly not a very reliable source, mentions the love of Seleukos towards Stratonike.³³ Indeed, the mention of love and affection would make better sense to a Greek audience that was already accustomed to stories coming from the east, as evidenced by the tales mentioned previously regarding the Persian court.³⁴ Note that the official reason probably did not address Stratonike's feelings.³⁵ It was presumably not wise to highlight the emotions of a stepmother towards her stepson.³⁶

Interestingly enough, there was perhaps another part in the propaganda that involved the exact opposite sentiment: not love, but the virtue of its suppression; an element of Seleukos' *imitatio Alexandri*. One may recall that Alexander, contrary to the expectations of victors and vanquished alike, is said to have avoided the Persian women who fell into his hands after the battle of Issos.³⁷ His self-restraint was

31 See the chapters of Harders and Engels and Erickson who question or at least contextualize the assumed divorces.

32 See Grainger 1990a, 12: 'That the marriage [to Apama] was maintained when it was in a sense disadvantageous for Seleukos is a strong indication that Seleukos' affections were engaged'.

33 Malalas 8.198: 'After the death of Apama, Seleukos saw and fell in love with an extremely beautiful girl called Stratonike, who was the daughter of Demetrios, son of that Antigonos.'

34 In the versions of Appian and Plutarch (see below), Seleukos seems to be addressing his soldiers or some public assembly. This might have been the context where he presumably tried to justify his act to his Greek/Macedonian subjects and the Greek/Macedonian public opinion.

35 See Lightfoot 2003, 375, who points out Plutarch's insinuation (*Demetr.* 38.11) that Stratonike was less than pleased to be handed over. This accords with her presentation in extant epigraphical evidence as the daughter of Demetrios, but never as the wife of Antiochos I. See the Delian inscription, *IG XI 4.415* (ca. 300 BC); Macurdy 1932, 81, esp. n. 23; Carney 1994a, 171.

36 See Watson, 1995, 215–16; it might be the case, however, that this sort of marriage, once the husband/father died, was perhaps acceptable in Macedonian practice. See Macurdy 1932, 21–22, who brings the examples of Eurydike I and Ptolemy of Aloros, Cleopatra V and Antiochos Eusebes.

37 Plut. *Alex.* 21.7–10: 'But Alexander, as it would seem, considering the mastery of himself a more kingly thing than the conquest of his enemies, neither laid hands upon these women, nor did he know any other before marriage, except Barsiné ... But as for the other captive women, seeing that they were surpassingly stately and beautiful, he merely said jestingly that Persian

noteworthy, as was the statement that the Persian women were ‘sores to his eyes’, an expression which hinted at some internal struggle.³⁸ This representation of Alexander is probably ahistorical, since we read in Plutarch and Justin that Dareios’ wife Stateira died in childbirth, almost two years after she was taken prisoner, and I advance the suggestion that this self-image had been designed by Alexander himself to conceal the harsh reality.³⁹ Seleukos’ restraint of his feelings for Stratonike, condensed in his willingness to pass on his wife to his son, somewhat echoes Alexander’s propagated behavior. There are differences, of course, since Stratonike was not his booty, as Dareios III’s harem was to Alexander; she was his wife. This goes hand in hand with further instances in which Seleukos (and the other Diadochi) attempted to imitate the public image of Alexander.⁴⁰

III. PASSION

The last layer in the story involves the part played by passion and love, as opposed to the deed itself and its political significance. We have three detailed versions of the romantic element, namely, by Plutarch, Appian and Lucian – with Plutarch’s being the most sophisticated among them. They all probably stem from the same source, either Hieronymos or Phylarchos.⁴¹ Several aspects reveal it to be typically Seleukid in the eyes of Greek authors: through many ironies, allusions and reversals, the Greek texts echo the way in which this affair reflected the unique position of Seleukid rule between east and west.

Let us start with the last scene of Appian (*Syr.* 61), condensed in the account of Plutarch. Trying to persuade his assembly of soldiers, Seleukos claims: “I charge you that none of the customs of the Persians and other nations is more worthy of observance than this one law, which is common to all of them, ‘That what the king ordains is always right’.”⁴² It was certainly correct of G. H. Macurdy to associate this claim with Herodotos’ picture of Kambyzes, who wished to marry his sister.⁴³

women were sores to the eyes’ (ἀλλ’ Ἀλέξανδρος ὡς ἔοικε τοῦ νικᾶν τοὺς πολεμίους τὸ κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλικώτερον ἡγούμενος, οὔτε τούτων ἔθιγεν, οὔτ’ ἄλλην ἔγνω γυναῖκα πρὸ γάμου πλὴν Βαρσίνης ... τὰς δ’ ἄλλας αἰχμαλώτους ὁρῶν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει διαφερούσας, ἔλεγε παίζων ὡς εἰσὶν ἀλγηδόνες ὁμμάτων αἱ Περσίδες). Cf. Diod. 17.38.4–7; Curt. 3.12.18–23.

38 Cf. Almagor 2011.

39 Dareios’ wife dies in childbirth: Plut. *Alex.* 30.1; Just. 11.12.6; cf. Curt. 4.10.18–19. Cf. Carney 1996, 570: “In any event, whatever the real nature of the relationship, the theme of Alexander’s sexual restraint was clearly intended to cope with rumors that he had not exercised it with Dareios’ wife ...”

40 Cf. Shipley 2000, 38, 116.

41 Phylarchos: Flaceliere and Chambry 1977, 12, 61; Duris: Sweet, 1951; Kebric 1977, 55–60; Hieronymos: Landucci 1978, 81; Hornblower 1981, 69–71.

42 ... καὶ οὐ Περσῶν ὑμῖν ἔθι καὶ ἐτέρων ἐθνῶν μάλλον ἢ τόνδε τὸν κοινὸν ἄπασιν ἐπιθήσω νόμον, αἰεὶ δίκαιον εἶναι τὸ πρὸς βασιλείῳς ὀριζόμενον.

43 Macurdy 1932, 79, with Hdt. 3.31: ‘Cambyzes fell in love with one of his sisters, and desired to take her to wife; so since he had it in mind to do that which was not customary, he called the Royal Judges and asked them whether there existed any law which permitted him who desired

Kambyzes asked his advisers, and while they could not find any Persian precedent, they did conclude that whatever the king dictated had the force of law. The irony of Herodotos' anecdote is that Kambyzes, a Persian absolute king (in the eyes of the Greeks) behaved in a completely un-Persian manner in his wish to follow the Egyptian practice of sibling marriage.⁴⁴

The form of incest displayed by the Stratonike/Antiochos story is more akin to the Persian type as stereotypically described by Greek authors, namely relationships between parents and children, i.e. mothers with sons or fathers with daughters.⁴⁵ It is of small relevance that Stratonike was in fact Antiochos' stepmother (in the sense of not being his biological mother), as this sort of Persian incestuous relationship also appears in our sources – the most notorious episode is the love of Ochos [later Artaxerxes III] and Atossa, his half-sister as well as stepmother, who later became his wife.⁴⁶ So not only the act itself may be deemed Persian or 'Eastern' by the Greeks, but also the justification Seleukos provides for the act portrays him as a typical caricature of the Persian king.

Furthermore, Seleukos' address to Macedonian soldiers before the wedding recalls the famous scene of the mass nuptials at Susa orchestrated by Alexander.⁴⁷ It is no wonder that Appian (or his source) might have chosen to allude to the former scene, as Seleukos was present at both occasions, and Antiochos is indeed the very outcome of the first. We do not have Alexander's speech from Susa, since Arrian's text has a lacuna at that point, while both Plutarch's biography and Diodorus are silent. Yet a comparison between Plutarch's *On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander*⁴⁸

it to marry his sister ... they gave him an answer which was both upright and safe, saying that they found no law which permitted a brother to marry his sister, but apart from that they had found a law to the effect that the king of the Persians might do whatsoever he desired' (ἡράσθη μὴς τῶν ἀδελφεῶν Καμβύσης, καὶ ἔπειτα βουλόμενος αὐτὴν γῆμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἐωθότα ἐπενόεε ποιῆσιν, εἶρετο καλέσας τοὺς βασιλῆιους δικαστὰς εἰ τις ἐστὶ κελεύων νόμος τὸν βουλόμενον ἀδελφεῇ συνοικεῖν ... εἰρομένου ὧν τοῦ Καμβύσεω, ὑπεκρίνοντο αὐτῷ οὗτοι καὶ δίκαια καὶ ἀσφαλέα, φάμενοι νόμον οὐδένα ἐξευρίσκειν ὃς κελεύει ἀδελφεῇ συνοικεῖν ἀδελφόν, ἄλλον μέντοι ἐξευρηθέναι νόμον, τῷ βασιλεύοντι Περσέων ἐξεῖναι ποιεῖν τὸ ἂν βούληται). Bevan 1902, 1.64 n. 2 preceeded Macurdy in the allusion. Herodotos translations are by G. C. Macaulay, *The History of Herodotus* (1890).

44 On Egyptian sibling-marriages see Diod. 1.27.1. Cf. Hopkins 1980; Shaw 1992. See Middleton 1962, 604–6. Cf. Ager 2006 on the Ptolemaic practice. But see Frandsen 2009, 36–9, 48–60.

45 Cf. Ktesias, F 44; Catullus 90; Plut. *Art.* 23; Curt. 7.2.19; Diog. Laert. 7 *proem.*; Athen. 5.220c; Tert. *Ad nat.* 1.16.4, *Apol.* 9.16; Philon, *Leg.* 3.13; Agathias, *Hist.* 2.24. Cf. Frandsen 2009, 88–102.

46 Plut. *Art.* 26.2, 30.1.

47 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.4–5.6; cf. Plut. *Eum.* 1.3. See Tarn 1948, 225, 333–4, 429, 434–40.

48 Plutarch, *De Fortuna aut Virtute Alexandri*, 1.7 (*Mor.* 329E): 'But methinks I would gladly have been a witness of that fair and holy marriage-rite, when he brought together in one golden-canopied tent an hundred Persian brides and an hundred Macedonian and Greek bridegrooms, united at a common hearth and board ... for he, of one maid the bridegroom, and at the same time of all the brides the escort, as a father and sponsor united them in the bonds of wedlock. Indeed at this sight I should have cried out for joy, "O dullard Xerxes, stupid fool that spent so much fruitless toil to bridge the Hellespont! This is the way that wise kings join Asia with Europe ... by the ties of lawful love and chaste nuptials and mutual joy in children that they join the nations together' (ἀλλ' ἐκείνης ἡδέως ἂν μοι δοκῶ γενέσθαι τῆς καλῆς καὶ

and Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander* at this juncture⁴⁹ shows what might have been in the original account of the wedding (perhaps composed by Chares).⁵⁰ It would seem that Appian contains two (reversed) references to the wedding at Susa. Alexander emphasized the union of Asia and Europe through joint children. In Appian, again, Asia and Europe are joined, yet now it is a marriage of an Asian prince (Antiochos), as it were, with a Macedonian queen (Stratonike), and not the other way around. Secondly, as opposed to Alexander's ideal, here the marriage is described as leading to a certain overlap in regal authority and not to its cohesion and consolidation.⁵¹ The author who was the common source for Plutarch and Appian thus seems to include a play on the unique manner in which east and west blend in the Seleukid Empire, as exemplified by Seleukos' act and by this interesting tale of passion and love. In so doing, he appears to have introduced new elements that built on the official version, and he seems to have been followed by

ιερός νυμφαγωγίας θεατής, ὅτε μὲν σκηνὴ χρυσωρόφῳ περιλαβών, ἐφ' ἐστίας κοινῆς καὶ τραπέζης, ἑκατὸν Περσίδας νύμφας, ἑκατὸν νυμφίους Μακεδόνas καὶ Ἑλληνας ... μᾶς νυμφίος, πασῶν δὲ νυμφαγωγὸς ἅμα καὶ πατὴρ καὶ ἀρμοστής κατὰ ζυγὰ συνῆπτεν. ἡδέως γὰρ ἂν εἶπον, 'ὦ βάρβαρε Ξέρξης καὶ ἀνόητε καὶ μάτην πολλὰ περὶ τὴν Ἑλλησποντίαν πονηθεὶς γέφυραν, οὕτως ἔμφρονες βασιλεῖς Ἀσίαν Εὐρώπῃ συνάπτουσιν ... ἔρωτι νομίμῳ καὶ γάμοις σόφροσι καὶ κοινωνίας παίδων τὰ γένη συνάπτοντες').

- 49 Curt. 10.3.11–14: 'That is why I married the daughter of the Persian Oxyartes, feeling no hesitation about producing children from a captive. Later on, when I wished to extend my bloodline further, I took Dareios' daughter as a wife and set the pattern for my closest friends to produce children by our captives, my intention being that by this sacred union I might erase all distinction between conquered and conqueror. So you can believe that you are my soldiers by family, not conscription. Asia and Europe are now one and the same kingdom ... it is no disgrace for the Persians to copy Macedonian customs, nor for the Macedonians to imitate the Persians. Those who are to live under the same king should enjoy the same rights' (*Ergo ipse Oxyartis Persae filiam mecum matrimonio iunxi, non dedignatus ex captiva liberos tollere. 12 Mox deinde, cum stirpem generis mei latius propagare cuperem, uxorem Darei filiam duxi proximisque amicorum auctor fui ex captivis generandi liberos, ut hoc sacro foedere omne discrimen victi et victoris excluderem. 13 Proinde genitos esse vos mihi, non adscitos milites credite. Asiae et Europae unum atque idem regnum est ... 14 nec Persis Macedonum morem adumbrare nec Macedonibus Persas imitari indecorum. Eiusdem iuris esse debent, qui sub eodem rege victuri sunt*'). Trans. J. C. Yardley, Curtius Rufus. *Histories of Alexander*, Book 10 (2009).

- 50 See Athen. 12.538b–539a. Cf. Curt. 10.3.12; Ael. VH 8.7.

- 51 App. Syr. 63: 'Then he assembled his army... and saying that as he was now growing old it was hard for him to govern it on account of its size. "I wish," he said, "to divide it, and so at the same time to provide for your safety in the future and give a part of it now to those who are dearest to me ... The dearest to me, and well worthy to reign, are my grownup son and my wife. As they are young, I pray they may soon have children to be an ample guarantee to you of the permanency of the dynasty. I will join them in marriage in your presence and will send them to be sovereigns of the upper provinces now.'" (ὥς δ' ἔπεισε, τὴν στρατιάν συναγαγόν ... διὸ καὶ γηρόντι ἤδη δυσκράτητον εἶναι διὰ τὸ μέγεθος. 'ἐθέλω δέ,' ἔφη, 'διελεῖν τὸ μέγεθος ἐς τὴν ὑμετέραν τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀμεριμνίαν, καὶ τὸ μέρος ἤδη δοῦναι τοῖς ἐμοῖς φιλάτοις ... φίλατοι δ' εἰσὶ μοι καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄξιοι τῶν τε παίδων ὁ τέλειος ἤδη καὶ ἡ γυνή. ἤδη δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ παῖδες, ὥς νέοις, γένοιντο ταχέως, καὶ πλέονες φύλακες ὑμῖν τῆς ἡγεμονίας εἶεν. ἀρμόζω σφίσιν ἀλλήλους ἐφ' ὑμῶν, καὶ πέμπω βασιλέας εἶναι τῶν ἐθνῶν ἤδη τῶν ἄνω).

Plutarch and Appian in this portrayal. It is hard to believe that these ironic allusions and subtleties were propagated by the Seleukid court itself.

One factor that is suggested by further elaborations of the story is that Antiochos was a true offspring of Alexander's policy of union of east and west. This is reflected in the account of his passion.⁵² Antiochos developed a growing obsession towards his (step)mother, which recalls the image of the uninhibited Persians (while indeed trying – eventually to no avail – to constrain his passion) mentioned above. One story in particular brings out the conflict between uncontrolled Persian demeanor and alleged Macedonian restraint: an observation of Herodotos (5.18) concerning the misbehavior of Persian delegates at a banquet in Macedon. The Persians insisted that the women sit closer to them, as they cannot contain themselves; the women were indeed 'pains for their eyes' (ἀλγηδόνας σφίσι ὀφθαλμῶν). Dressed up as women, the Macedonians retorted with a deadly ruse.⁵³ We mentioned earlier that Alexander promulgated the image of himself as self-restrained in the face of the Persian women. This side would reverberate in Antiochos as well, as another sort of *imitatio Alexandri*: the young prince represses his emotions and conceals them (*Demetr.* 38.2), even to the point of self-sacrifice. The internal struggle displays, as it were, the very state of the Seleukid Empire as being situated between Persian and Macedonian traditions.

This distinctly Seleukid mixture can be seen in the passions depicted in the scene. While Appian only has grief, anger and other emotions (λύπας μὲν οὖν καὶ ὀργὰς καὶ ἐπιθυμίας ἄλλας ὁμολογεῖσθαι), Plutarch's picture is richer.⁵⁴ Two of the passions in his list should be highlighted: the first is the 'darkened vision' (ὄψεων ὑπολείψεις), which alludes to the two instances where passion causes pains to the eyes mentioned previously – both among the Persian delegates in Macedon and Alexander towards the Persian women. This is an expression of the inner struggle between the two elements within the prince's soul. The second is the 'fiery flushes' (ἐρύθημα πυρώδες). Now the adjective πυρώδες repeatedly typifies Alexander in Plutarch's biography, as much as it characterizes the Persians in a way that leads eventually to the great conflagration.⁵⁵ Here is an aspect in which Persian and Macedonian passionate traits serve to incite each other.

52 Quoting Macurdy 1932, 78: 'His son Antiochos ... had the advantage of being half-Iranian in blood'.

53 On this scene see Fearn 2007.

54 Plut. *Dem.* 38.4: 'whenever Stratonike came to see him, as she often did, either alone, or with Seleukos, lo, those tell-tale signs of which Sappho sings were all there in him, stammering speech, fiery flushes, darkened vision, sudden sweats, irregular palpitations of the heart, and finally, as his soul was taken by storm, helplessness, stupor, and pallor' (τῆς δὲ Στρατονίκης καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὴν καὶ μετὰ τοῦ Σελεύκου φοιτώσης πολλάκις ἐγίνετο τὰ τῆς Σαπφῶς ἐκεῖνα περὶ αὐτὸν πάντα, φωνῆς ἐπίσχεσις, ἐρύθημα πυρώδες, ὄψεων ὑπολείψεις, ἰδρώτες ὅξεις, ἀταξία καὶ θόρυβος ἐν τοῖς σφυγμοῖς, τέλος δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ κράτος ἡττημένης ἀπορία καὶ θάμβος καὶ ὥχριασις).

55 See Plut. *Alex.* 4.5: ἡ τοῦ σώματος κρᾶσις πολύθερμος οὖσα καὶ πυρώδης (... the temperament of his body, which was a very warm and fiery one ...). Cf. 75.6, 35.14–15. See Sansone 1980; Whitmarsh 2002. See Almagor 2011, 15–16.

Plutarch's version has an explicit mention of Sappho and the erotic symptoms she describes in the celebrated fragment 31 (Lobel-Page), cited by Ps.-Longinus (10.3).⁵⁶ A closer inspection shows that Antiochos' symptoms in Plutarch's paraphrasing are not quite similar to the poetess' list, apart from perhaps φωνῆς which echoes Sappho's ὥς με φώναισ' (vv. 7–8), ἰδρῶτες which may allude to ἰδρῶς (v. 13) and πυρῶδες that hints at πῦρ (v. 10).⁵⁷ Yet, like in Sappho's picture, which may be interpreted as a mixture of love and jealousy,⁵⁸ Plutarch follows suit in highlighting the aspects of love and covetousness in a love triangle. One key to this understanding is the emphasis on Stratonike visiting the sick Antiochos together with Seleukos (*Demetr.* 38.4), alluding to the Sapphic 'that man'.⁵⁹ Allegorically, Seleukos finds himself situated between his half-barbarian son and his Macedonian queen.⁶⁰

In a brilliant analysis, A. V. Zadorojnyi (1999) has shown the importance of the affair to Plutarch's philosophical notions of how emotions should be channelled towards the right course. In this story, Antiochos' emotions are not eradicated. By way of ascending through three intellectual types – namely, a poet (Sappho), a rationalist physician (Erasistratos)⁶¹ and a wise ruler (Seleukos)⁶² – the emotions are present. The physical manifestations of the emotions are first diagnosed and objectively identified, then related by a psychosomatic sympathy to passions in the soul, and then find remedy through the decision of the king. Zadorojnyi likens this resolution of channelling Antiochos' passions into a marriage to the habitual taming of passions by reason, particularly by proportional application of the practice of *metriopatheia*. He also suggests a favourable depiction of Seleukos by Plutarch as contrast to the negative Demetrios, one who shows self-control and delicacy in sexual behaviour as opposed to Demetrios' unrestrained desires (*Demetr.* 9.5–6, 14.4, 19.5–6, 24.1–6, 26.5). In the process, he alludes to Plato's celebrated image of the soul as a chariot with a team of two horses and a charioteer in the *Phaedros* (246a–254e). According to this interpretation, Demetrios appears as the 'bad' horse and Seleukos as its opposite.

56 Plutarch refers to this poem elsewhere: *Amat.* 763a, *Prof. virt.* 81d.

57 See Zadorojnyi 1999, 519. ψυχῆς might be a play on ψύχρος (v. 13) but may also echo Plato's own paraphrase (see below).

58 See Page 1955, 28; Zadorojnyi 1999, 519, 529; cf. Devereux 1970, 26. The rivalry between Seleukos and Antiochos echoes another story, devoid of erotic significance, of father and son struggling to eat a dead mouse during the siege of Athens (*Demetr.* 34.2: πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἐν οἰκίῳ καθέζεσθαι τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ἀπεγνωκότας, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ὀροφῆς μὴν νεκρὸν ἐκτεσεῖν, τοὺς δ' ὥς εἶδον ἀναπηδήσαντας ἀμφοτέρους διαμάχεσθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ).

59 Interestingly, in a narratological level, the mention of 'these phrases of Sappho' (τὰ τῆς Σαπφούς ἔχεινα), while also being an ironic allusion to 'that' (κῆνος), might also spell the narrator's jealousy of Sappho's ability to describe the passions. Like Antiochos obtaining Stratonike, the narrator's paraphrasing the poem only appropriates what was not his initially.

60 An image of this position occupied by Seleukos can be found in Plutarch. For instance, earlier, he writes of Seleukos' two different subject populations (*Demetr.* 18.3: Σέλευκος ἐντυγχάνων τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἐπεὶ τοῖς γε βαρβάροις <καὶ> πρότερον οὗτος ὡς βασιλεὺς ἐχρημάτιζε).

61 Plutarch mentions Erasistratos elsewhere: *De curios.* 518c, *QC* 7.1 698a.

62 Corresponding to the scale of lives expounded by Plato based on the closeness to philosophical rationality (*Phaedr.* 248d–e).

Such an understanding is certainly valid, yet it would seem, as usual, that Plutarch's portrayal is more complex and has further layers that affect our judgement of the scene and its protagonists. First, Seleukos does not appear as an entirely good, wise or just ruler; near the end of the biography (*Demetr.* 52.6), he turns out to be ill-reputed because of his inhumane treatment of Demetrios.⁶³ Secondly, reading the entire *Life*, we might form a different opinion of the Stratonike affair. In two other consecutive chapters (*Demetr.* 21–22), two artefacts are said to elicit approximately the same feelings observed in Antiochos when confronted by Stratonike: a siege engine advancing with much commotion captures the mind of whoever sees it and is charming in its sight for those who behold it;⁶⁴ a painting by Protogenes, described as so magnificent that Apelles cannot speak in its presence.⁶⁵ Bearing in mind one of the biography's *motifs*, i. e., the distinction between nature and artificiality,⁶⁶ Seleukos' deed may be perceived as being just as problematic as the difficult situation it is meant to cure, and equally unnatural.⁶⁷

Seleukos confounds the natural order and natural differentiation between father and son.⁶⁸ In both of his decisions regarding his son and his father-in-law respectively, he conflicts with nature. Specifically, the arrest Seleukos imposes on Demetrios confines the latter to a place where one side of his composite personality is removed, the military aspect that naturally balanced his licentious side (*Demetr.* 19.5).⁶⁹ Perhaps a comparison should be drawn not only between Seleukos and Demetrios, but also between the two 'sons', Antiochos and Demetrios.⁷⁰ Thus,

63 We must recall that Plutarch also knew the tradition of the rhetorical schools where this type of deed was attributed to a demented king (see n. 6). The reader is also reminded of the circumstances of Seleukos' treacherous death, in accord with his perfidious behaviour towards Demetrios, and in an ambitious and vain attempt to get hold of Macedonia (cf. Nepos, *De Reg.* 3.3; Strab. 13.4.1; App. *Syr.* 62; Just. 17.2.4).

64 ... ἀσάλευτον ἰσορρόπως ἅμα ῥοῖζω καὶ τόνῳ πολλῷ προχωροῦν **θάμβος** ἅμα τῇ **ψυχῇ** καὶ χάριν τινὰ τῇ **δύει** τῶν θεωμένων παρεῖχε (*Demetr.* 21.3). Illusory dreams or visions (and deception) appear throughout the *Life*: 4.3–4; 19.2, cf. 50.7.

65 καὶ φησιν Ἀπελλῆς οὕτως ἐκπλαγῆναι θεασάμενος τὸ ἔργον, ὥστε καὶ **φωνὴν** ἐπιλαττεῖν αὐτόν. Voice has a problematic status in the *Life*: is it natural, sincere or contrived? (*Demetr.* 3.2; 18.1, 5, 7; 28.8; 34.5–6).

66 Apparent already in the first sentence (*Demetr.* 1.1), with the emphasis on the arts (τέχναι).

67 In fact, by giving licence to his son's passions, Seleukos is not far off from Antigonos' leniency towards his own son's decadence (*Demetr.* 19.4–9).

68 This is apparent also in Demetrios' incarceration, and Seleukos' alleged attempt to restrict him, something Antigonos never did. This is another *motif* of the biography. The question of the identity of Demetrios' father (*Demetr.* 2.1) is paralleled by a query on Demetrios' son (*Demetr.* 53.9).

69 εἰρήνης γὰρ οὐσης ἀφύβριζεν εἰς ταῦτα, καὶ σχολάζων ἐχρήτο πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀνειμένως αὐτῷ καὶ κατακόρως, ἐν δὲ τοῖς πολέμοις ὡς οἱ φύσει σῶφρονες ἔνηφε. The lack of any military aspect is somewhat ironically foreshadowed in the depiction of Antiochos' passions, in that terms are employed which otherwise appear in military contexts within the biography: ὀξέως (7.5; 40.2; 43.1), τάξις (16.2), θόρυβος (8.5; 11.5; 37.1; 49.3) and ἀπορία (19.3; 33.6; 34.2; 47.2; 48.4). Note also κατὰ κράτος ἡττημένης in 38.4. The word ἀπορία in 38.4 is thus doubly significant.

70 Zadorojnyi 1999, 528 notices the comparison between Demetrios' relationship with Lamia 'the Fever' (*Demetr.* 19.8) and Antiochos' real fever.

while Demetrios may indeed be seen as close to Plato's portrayal of the soul's 'bad' horse, it is Antiochos who may be seen as the 'good' stallion. Plutarch's choice of vocabulary reflects the good horse's resistance to the call of passion (254c4–5: ὁ μὲν ὑπ' αἰσχύνῃς τε καὶ **θάμβους ἰδρώτι** πᾶσαν ἔβρεξε τὴν **ψυχὴν**).⁷¹ In this case, Seleukos would come close to playing the part of the charioteer, in his treatment of both Antiochos and Demetrios: he broke two agreements with Demetrios, one regarding the marriage alliance with Stratonike⁷² and another when he invited Demetrios for an interview, but kept him prisoner.⁷³ Such actions compare well with the breach of the verbal agreement the charioteer and the good horse made with the other steed (*Phaedr.* 254b–e). In light of Plato's *Phaedros*, Plutarch's presentation does thus not oppose the negative Demetrios and the positive Seleukos in a clear-cut manner, as it might appear at a first glance, but may rather involve some intentional conflation of images.⁷⁴ Similarly, Antiochos undoubtedly has a sense of shame (*Demetr.* 38.2) like the good horse (*Phaedr.* αἰσχύνῃ), yet he pulls the 'charioteer', his father, towards a passionate course (cf. *Phaedr.* 255e–256a), which eventually leads to the new marriage.

For our last point, we move from the *Phaedros* to Phaidra. The well-known Greek myth of the unchaste Athenian queen is a variation of the folkloric motif of 'the unjustly accused', very similar to the tale of 'Potiphar's wife' (*Genesis* 39). A married woman falls in love with an uncompromising youth, attempts to seduce him, is rejected upon disclosure of her passion, and then charges him with an attempted rape; in Phaidra's case, she falls in love with her stepson.⁷⁵ The story and the motif of the vicious stepmother were treated in Greek tragedy several times.⁷⁶ Euripides is known to have produced two versions, only one of which is extant. The first, *Hippolytos* I (the so called *Kalyptomenos*, see *TrGF* F 428–447), detailed the sexual aggressiveness of an impudent Phaidra against an austere and virtuous Hippolytos.⁷⁷ The second, *Hippolytos* II, or *Stephanephoros*, made its appearance in 428 BC.⁷⁸ In the latter, Phaidra is determined to die rather than reveal her pas-

71 See Hackforth 1952, 107–8; de Vries 1969, 169–70; Yunis 2011, 161–2.

72 Cf. Plutarch's ἀταξία and Plato's λιπόντε τὴν τάξιν καὶ ὁμολογίαν (*Phaedr.* 254d).

73 Cf. *Demetr.* 50.9: 'sundry people kept coming to him from Seleukos bringing kindly messages and exhorting him to be of good cheer, since as soon as Antiochos came with Stratonike, he was to be set at liberty' (παρ' αὐτοῦ τινες ὅμως ἐπιφοιτῶντες [ἀπὸ τοῦ Σελεύκου] ἦγον, κομίζοντες ἐπικρατεῖς λόγους καὶ θαρρεῖν παρακαλοῦντες, ὥς ὅταν πρῶτον Ἀντίοχος ἀφίκηται σὺν Στρατονίκη διεθισόμενον).

74 Similarly, Plutarch confounds together in the same description 'swallowiness' (ὠχρόσις) and 'fleshes' (ἐρύθημα) which elsewhere he claims no one would confuse (*Anim. an corp.* 501a). More than Sappho herself, and *pace* Ps.-Longinus (cf. Page 1955, 27), Plutarch has succeeded in creating a perplexing picture of the erotic symptoms.

75 Another version of the story in Greek literature is that of Bellerophon and Stheneboia. Cf. Aristoph. *Ran.* 1043–54. See Thompson 1955–8, 4.474–5 and 5.386.

76 Cf. Watson 1997, 22–5, 136–7, and especially 108–13 on the *saeva noverca* motif which is non-existent in Euripides' second *Hippolytos*. Euripides produced other plays with this theme (like the *Stheneboia*), which survive only in fragments.

77 See Barrett 1964, 15–22, 26–45; Halleran 1995, 25–37.

78 Sophokles' lost *Phaidra* was probably produced between Euripides' two plays. See *TrGF* IV F 677–93. See Barrett 1964, 22–6.

sion, but in the end she is a tragic figure whose secret is betrayed by her old nurse. Phaidra appears as weak (vv. 135–38, 215) and experiences a feverish longing (vv. 208–211). Eventually, Phaidra commits suicide, but denounces Hippolytos by a note, which leads to his death as a result of Theseus' curse.

It was Mesk who first saw that the Antiochos-Stratonike story bears a striking resemblance to Euripides' version.⁷⁹ The similarities between the two stories lie in the ways the respective protagonists deal with the love sickness: first, silence and suppression (Plut. *Demetr.* 38.2), followed by failure, a malady, physical weakness and a wish to die; at the last stage another character appears (Phaidra's nurse, Erasistratos the physician) whose task is to break the cycle of guilt and silence.⁸⁰ Yet, an explicit connection between Antiochos and Phaidra is noted only in the work attributed to Lucian, *De Syria Dea*. After bringing in a version of the affair (17–18), Lucian narrates another story (19–25), in which Stratonike plays an active amorous role with one of king Seleukos' men, Kombabos, who escorts her in a mission to rebuild the temple at Hierapolis.⁸¹

The way in which Phaidra's story is transformed and elaborated in one of our versions of the Stratonike affair points towards the new circumstances in the Seleukid kingdom. First, the transformation of the story from its Euripidean setting into the court of Seleukos involved a transition from an emphasis on Athenian democratic values (as opposed to aristocratic standards) into a monarchic environment. Both Euripides' Hippolytos and Phaidra are devoted to the aristocracy's standards with their emphasis on reputation,⁸² yet these are reconfigured and related to the new context of democracy. Thus, Phaidra is worried about what society may think about her.⁸³ Hippolytos the young oligarch⁸⁴ with his quietism, his non-conformity, individualism, private ethic and his choice of virginity as an indication of private secluded life (cf. vv. 93, 459, 948) is disrespectful of public opinion and

79 Mesk 1913, 389–90. Cf. Lightfoot 2003, 375.

80 The transition to a physician almost expected by the nurse's use of *nosos* (vv. 40, 394, 766, 1306) of the passion and its effects on Phaidra, the use of *pharmakon* (vv. 478–9). Cf. also the involvement of Asklepios in some versions in restoring Hippolytos to life (cf. Ps.-Apoll. *Bibl.* 3.10.8).

81 [Luc.], *De Syr. Dea* 23: 'and what the Greeks allege about their Stheneboia and about Phaidra the Knosian the Assyrians tell in the same way about Stratonike. For my part I do not believe that either Stheneboia nor Phaidra acted thus if Phaidra really loved Hippolytos' (καὶ τὸ Ἕλληνες Σθενεβοίης περὶ λέγουσι καὶ Φαίδρης τῆς Κνωσσίας, ταυτὶ καὶ Ἀσσύριοι ἐς Στρατονίκην μυθολογέουσιν. ἐγὼ μὲν νυν οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίην πείθομαι οὐδὲ Φαίδρην τοιάδε ἐπιτελέσαι, εἰ τὸν Ἱππόλυτον ἀτρεκέως ἐπόθει Φαίδρη. Trans. H. A. Strong (1913). See Lightfoot 2003, 384–417, and especially 401 on the significance of joining these two stories together. See Engels and Erickson in this volume.

82 Cf. vv. 411–12; for reputation, εὐκλεία, see vv. 419–23, 489, 687, 717, 1028, 1299. Cf. Michelini 1987, 314.

83 See Segal 1970, 282.

84 See Gregory 1991, 62; Connor 1972, 184–5; Carter 1986, 52–6. Hippolytos prefers the *aristoi* as friends (vv. 1018, 1242) and was opposed to the *kakoi* (vv. 81, 651, 666, 949, 1031, 1071, 1075, 1191).

norms.⁸⁵ The play's stress on the notion of honor and *aidos* (shame),⁸⁶ understood as respecting the society's values,⁸⁷ emphasizes the extent to which Hippolytos is in the wrong (especially in his understanding of the excellence of *sophrosyne*).⁸⁸ Moreover, in the play even Theseus is made to be 'democratic',⁸⁹ and a certain anti-monarchic tone is heard.⁹⁰ Conversely, the Stratonike affair offers an entirely new political system and context, in which Antiochos' shame (*aischyne*) is needless, since public standards shift in response to the wishes of the Hellenistic king. It is symptomatic of the new monarchy that public morality is now decided by a private decision.⁹¹

Second, it would seem that Lucian's juxtaposition of the two stories is not accidental and rather intended to indicate the dual nature of Seleukos and Stratonike. In the first story Seleukos gives up his wife Stratonike to his son and her future spouse; in the second (which chronologically takes place first), he does not yield to Kombabos, Stratonike's would-be lover, to be relieved of his task of escorting her. In the first tale, Stratonike is passive, in the second she is active and takes the initiative. Presumably, this presentation alludes to the dual character of the Seleukid monarchy, and perhaps this highlights its position between the barbarian east and the Greek west. The first tale is a reversed Greek mythic narrative (that of Phaidra) in eastern surroundings. It is no wonder that it ends with a description of an establishment of a Greek *polis* in the East, characteristic of Seleukid policies.⁹² In the second legend, an eastern story (featuring Kombabos) is made to parallel a Greek story (that of Antiochos and Stratonike). This parallelism accords well with another Seleukid policy in the east, that of patronage of an already existing eastern temple, the very core of the Kombabos affair.

85 Hippolytos offends Aphrodite who is democratic, according to Gregory 1991, 54 in that she affects everyone alike (v. 450). On Athenian aristocratic quietism see cf. Thuk. 1.70, 2.63.3.

86 For the concept see Barrett 1964, 171–2, 230, 206–7: *aidos* as an inhibitory emotion, feeling of 'not quite liking' which inhibits natural self assertion or self seeking in face of the requirements of morality. See Dover 1974, 226–9, esp. 220 n. 3. See Cairns 1993, 1–47, 154. It is a shame that restrains or keep one's conscience clear and inhibits departure from society's values.

87 Cf. vv. 1034–5. Two notions of *aidos* are ostensibly presented in Phaidra's speech (vv. 385–6). See Williams 1993, 95–8; Halleran 1995, 43 on *aidos* in this play.

88 Moderation and being *Sophron* (that is, sensible, in control of pleasures and emotions, or one who overcomes temptation: see Plat. *Symp.* 196c; Antiphon F 59 DK) were associated with the aristocratic elite and had oligarchic connotations. Cf. Theogn. 441–6; cf. Solon, F 5, 6, 34, 37 West. Cf. Aristoph. *Ran.* 727–8. On Hippolytos as *Sophron* see vv. 72–81, 993–5, 1007, 1100–1, 1365. In Euripides' ingenious portrayal, Hippolytos distorts the concept by his exaggeration and lack of moderation in its employment, thereby almost effecting an understanding of the concept as compatible with the egalitarian principles of the democracy.

89 Theseus, as Knox 1952, 23–4 rightly saw, is presented as a fifth century statesman rather than a king. He is conscious of his public audience in the polis (e. g., vv. 817, 884).

90 In Hippolytos' speech (vv. 923, 935, 985); see Sale 1977, 49 ff.

91 Interestingly, the *Phaidra* of the Stoic Seneca places nature as the key concept of contextualisation. See Boyle 1987, 18–24.

92 See 18: 'He himself departed into the region of Babylonia and founded a city on the Euphrates which bore his name' (αὐτὸς δὲ ἐς τὴν Βαβυλωνίην χώραν ἀπύκετο καὶ πόλιν ἐπὶ τῷ Εὐφράτῃ ἐπώνυμον ἐωυτοῦ ἐποιήσατο, ἐνθα οἱ καὶ ἡ τελευτὴ ἐγένετο).

IV. EPILOGUE

In its historical setting, as well as in its image and literary representations, the marriage of Stratonike and Antiochos replacing the marital agreement between Seleukos and Stratonike marked a watershed in the history of both the Seleukid kingdom and Hellenistic political systems. For contemporaries as well as future generations, the deed epitomized all that the new age stood for in both real and fictional terms. We see this in particular with the emphasis on the monarch's absolute power, the novel values and ideals affecting court demeanour, the blending of western and eastern practices and the stress on private emotions and passion as key factors dictating public policies. At the juncture of all these factors stands the actual and imagined figure of Stratonike, who participated in this great and significant shift only as a passive agent.

Considering the entire affair in a broader literary context, however, brings to light the character of the deed itself, the transfer of the bride, much more clearly. Presumably, this close-to-incestuous remarriage followed some Achaimenid practice designed to corroborate the sharing of power between the king and his designated successor. I hope that my study of the literary traditions preceding and following the spectacular marriage of Stratonike and Antiochos have paved the way to a better understanding of the elements of an official Seleukid court version that would have sought to position the union within this Achaimenid tradition. At the same time, I have tried to isolate embellishments or rather distortions of the same event, that is the nuances rendering Antiochos as victim of his passion, which seem to root in the moralizing and anti-monarchical Hellenistic literary tradition and have lived on well into Roman times and beyond.

THE DIPLOMACY OF SELEUKID WOMEN: APAMA AND STRATONIKE

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with Apama's support of Demodamas of Miletus' Sogdian expedition, the women of the Seleukid dynasty participated in diplomatic activities which consolidated and extended Seleukid authority. In doing so, they utilized connections to their birth families and homes, gifts from their own personal wealth, cultic patronage and associations, and friendships with different parties. Drawing on examples from the lives of Apama and Stratonike, this paper will categorize and discuss the patterns of these women's diplomacy based on a) their filial and affinal relationships, and b) on their individual agency in assisting the establishment of the Seleukid kingdom. While their marriages are generally focused upon as the major diplomatic events of their careers, their subsequent actions had important and long-lasting political ramifications. Important is the extent to which these queens were agents for Seleukid king-making. For Apama, the Achaimenid background is analyzed for insights into her expectations as a Persian noblewoman and wife of a Macedonian satrap on the road to kingship. For Stratonike, the evidence of her dedications on Delos is prominent, not only as a departure from the typical romanticized representations of her queenship, but also as evidence for her own diplomatic priorities in the west and their relation to Seleukid affairs.

The first two Seleukid queens present two distinct but comparable histories of early Hellenistic royal women. They had different personal backgrounds, life experiences, preferences, and choices, but, linked by marriage to the same man, they both put their mark on the formation of Seleukid rulership. Apama journeyed with Seleukos on his path to kingship, playing a significant part in the formation of his new status, while Stratonike brought a merger with Antigonid interests and presided over western foreign relations for many years. Both queens had royal backgrounds of their own, meaning that they brought authority and legitimacy to their marriages, strengthening the positions of Seleukos and Antiochos I among the other Diadochoi. This study examines the constraints, powers, and motivations of the two individual queens through the evidence for their public actions which may be termed 'diplomatic', that is actions in political spheres beyond the royal court and undertaken to advance and consolidate the Seleukid power-base. The motives for this diplomacy

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reflect the changing circumstances of Apama and Stratonike's personal lives, and encompass the original aims of their marriages to Seleukos as well as reactions to new family configurations and political opportunities.

Recent research on Hellenistic queens is demonstrating in ever more detail that the key to understanding these women is the set of propagandistic and actual characteristics and actions best collectively termed their 'role', and that while there were broader patterns in their lives, there was no single queenly role shared by all. A glance at the women of the Seleukid dynasty highlights certain important qualifiers for an assessment of Hellenistic queens in general. First, royal authority and status were distributed among all royal women born to and married into the family, wives, co-wives, daughters, nieces, and concubines included, so that 'queenship' cannot presuppose a role belonging to a sole consort of a king. The taking on of a queenly role by the daughter of royal personages in some instances carried more weight than simply being a ruler's spouse. Second, changes over time to the territories under Seleukid rule, the wider diplomatic context, and the malleability of royal traditions meant that the conditions facing a queen in the late 4th century were different from those of the late 2nd century. Thus while Apama and Stratonike set a template for royal action, their choices and queenly images differ from those of their descendants; while co-existing within a polygynous arrangement with Seleukos I, they did not create the tensions later seen between Laodike I and Berenike Phernophoros. Third, each woman in the dynasty, especially one who married in, brought a unique set of connections, experiences, and preferences which shaped her political behaviour. Macedonian warrior culture and the masculinity of Hellenistic kingly performance make it too easy to forget the agency and labour of royal women at court and beyond. Roy has convincingly shown that queens were essential to the construction and maintenance of Hellenistic royal legitimacy as a whole, as well as in king-making specifically.¹ The quiet periods in the documentary record for Hellenistic queens thus do not denote their idleness, and, as is argued here, we may understand the life of a Seleukid woman to be one of sustained activity in economic, political, and diplomatic affairs. From what the evidence shows, the foundation of the Seleucid dynasty was a partnership between two successful and charismatic warriors and two powerful and diplomatically astute women.

I. APAMA

In 299/8 BC the people of Miletos honoured Apama in a decree recorded on a stele found at Didyma. The surviving inscription is missing the line detailing how exactly the queen was to be honoured, but the accepted reconstruction has her receiving a statue at Didyma, due to discovery there of a base bearing her name.² The stated reason for honouring Apama is that she favoured a group of Milesians who had been out campaigning with her husband and was now very enthusiastic about

1 Roy 1998.

2 The decree: *IDidyma* 480; the statue base: *IDidyma* 113.

the visit of Milesian ambassadors to discuss the new temple of Apollo. Also listed is the generosity of Apama's son, Antiochos, who in the previous year had announced he would pay for the construction of a huge stoa in the city centre whose rents would provide income for the temple project.³ Apama is called *basilissa*, among the earliest examples of this title employed in reference to the wife of one of the Diadochs, for that reason alone making this decree significant.⁴ The title *basilissa* is here used by the Milesians, not Seleukos and Apama, and while probable that they had begun to use the title for her, its appearance in the decree is interesting for what it shows of the Milesians' attitude. Times were good for them since Seleukos returned the archaic cult statue of Apollo plundered by Xerxes⁵ and commenced construction of the grand new temple of Apollo at Didyma, commissioning the same architect who was then building the new Artemision at Ephesus.⁶ Then prince Antiochos announced his grand stoa, measuring a stade squared, which aided the temple project and revitalized the *polis* agora.⁷ Calling Apama 'queen' trumpeted her rightful status, thereby drawing attention to the Milesians' own worthiness in having such royal benefactors.

The Milesian decree of 299 is also important as a rare example of Apama appearing in the epigraphic record.⁸ Louis Robert drew attention to the decree because of its connection to Demodamas and the reference to Milesians in military service with Seleukos. He identifies Demodamas as the man described by Pliny the Elder as 'Seleuci et Antiochi dux' who erected altars to Apollo Didymeus on the far side of the Iaxartes river (Syr Darya) and whose account of his travels served as a source for Pliny's description of Media, Margiana, Baktria, and Scythian territory.⁹ Robert argues that Demodamas campaigned on the far eastern frontier, where Apama's father had been satrap, and instigated the decrees of his home city to honour his royal patrons, because Apama had rendered aid to him personally and his contingent of Milesian mercenaries around 306, as Seleukos campaigned through

3 *IDidyma* 479; *OGIS* 213.

4 Carney 2011, 202.

5 The archaic style statue was made in bronze by Kanachos of Sikyon, Paus. 2.10.5; 9.10.2; Plin. *NH* 34.19, and a 1st century (BC or AD) Roman statuette in the British Museum (1824,0405.1) is a purported copy; Xerxes would have removed the statue from Miletos in 479, and it was rediscovered in the royal treasury at Ekbatana, probably after Seleukos' defeat of Nikanor of Media in 311, Paus. 1.16.1–3, 8.46.3; Strabo 14.1.5.

6 The architects were Daphnis of Miletos and Paionios of Ephesos, Vitruv. 7, *praef.* 16. Cf. Voigtländer 1975, 63.

7 Antiochos' stoa survives as the 'Südmarkt' just south of the agora, comprising one approximately stade-long stoa on the south side with two L-shaped stoas to the north, forming a large open square, Bringmann/von Steuben 1995, 343–4, abb. 138 & 139. An architrave inscription found near the propylaion of the adjacent bouleuterion bears a text similar to that specified for the dedication in the Milesian decree: *IDidyma* 479, ll. 25–6: Ἀντίοχον τὸν Σελεύκου τοῦ βασιλέως υἱὸν προεσβύτατον compared to *Inschriften von Milet* I, 7, 193a: Ἀντίοχος βασιλέως Σελεύκου ὁ προεσβύτατος υἱός.

8 Robert 1984, 470 n. 26.

9 Plin. *NH* 6.49. He also served as a source for Steph. Byz.: Robert 1984, 468. Wiegand (1958, 282) also noted the connection.

Sogdia.¹⁰ His appearance in Pliny as a commander under Antiochos would refer to a second campaign in the late 290s when the prince was dealing with a nomadic incursion.¹¹

As a representation of Apama's activity, the Milesian decree compares to other, similar resolutions by Greek *poleis* to honour another Seleukid queen after she had rendered assistance and support. In the late 200s Teos and Iasos in western Asia Minor praised Laodike III as 'eager' (*ektenē*) and 'zealous' (*prothumon*) for *euergetia*, and as 'piously and gratefully disposed' to gods and men.¹² The Milesians praised Apama using a phrase – 'since she formerly showed much goodwill (*eunoia*) and zeal (*prothumia*)' – similar to the one employed toward her son in the 300/299 decree.¹³ The term *prothumia* implies a readiness for action on behalf of the beneficiary *poleis*, which matches the decrees' references to material aid and political advocacy. Regarding Apama's demonstration of goodwill to the Milesian soldiers, one suggestion is that they had been assigned as her bodyguard;¹⁴ Robert argues that her late father's association with Baktria and high status equipped her to assist Demodamas in his work, and this combined with her favour to his native cult built up a good rapport between the queen and the soldiers.¹⁵ This is a reasonable supposition based on the language of the decree and the other evidence we have. It is possible to go further, however, and assess the type of aid Apama may have given these men, how she would have achieved this and why, and what that says about the developing Seleukid rulership. Doing so involves a look at the Achaimenid context in which she grew up as daughter of a satrap and learned how to be a powerful woman, as well as the constraints imposed after Alexander's conquest and during her marriage to Seleukos.

It is clear that Apama possessed very high status, since her name is associated with royal women of the Achaimenids and her father Spitamenes was Dareios III's satrap of Sogdia and leader of the Persian resistance after Bessos, a role that would have positioned him to declare himself king had he succeeded. It was common for Achaimenid princes to serve as leaders of the Baktrians, which typically also included rule of Sogdia, for example Tanyoxarkes son of Kyros II, Hystaspes son of Dareios I, Masistes another son of Dareios I, Hystaspes son of Xerxes.¹⁶ Spitamenes' daughter's name suggests that he may have married an Achaimenid princess, furthering a claim of kingship. Other Apamas are known among the prominent women of the Achaimenid period, notably Apama the daughter of Artaxerxes II. She married Pharnabazos, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia;¹⁷ their granddaughters Barsine

10 Robert 1984, 471–2; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26–7.

11 Robert 1984, 472; at this time he refortified at least two destroyed cities: Antiocheia-Margiana, Plin. *NH* 6.47, Strab. 11.10.2, Isidore *FGrH* 781 F2 § 14; Artakoana in Aria, Plin. *NH* 6.93, Isidore § 15.

12 Ma 2000, nos. 17, ll. 38–9 & 18, ll. 73–4.

13 *IDidyma* 479, ll. 3–4 & 480, l. 5.

14 From Wiegand, cited by Robert 1984, 471.

15 Robert 1984, 471–2.

16 Tanyoxarkes: Ktesias F 9.8; Hystaspes (a): Hdt. 7.64.2; Masistes: Hdt. 9.113.2; Hystaspes (b): Diod. 11.69.2.

17 Plut. *Artax.* 27.

and Apama, also named Artakama, were captured in 330 and married by Alexander at Susa in 324. Barsine, having formed a relationship with Alexander, now married him, while Apama married Ptolemy son of Lagos. Arrian calls the second sister 'Artakama', and this may have been her birth name, with Apama being her official name.¹⁸ Written in the second century BC, *1 Esdras* recounts a story told by Zerubbabel, repeated by Josephus, of an Apama who habitually sat with Dareios I on this throne, removing his diadem and placing it on her own head.¹⁹ Use of the pejorative Greek term *pallakis/pallakē* to describe this lady represents the Greek stereotype of an influential concubine at court – lacking in decorum and powerful from holding the king in sexual thrall – which in turn reveals a misunderstanding and underestimation of the status of such women,²⁰ but this story bears out the association of Persian royalty with the name Apama. Brosius argues that Irdabama, a prominent woman at the court of Dareios I who owned estates, supervised several large groups of workers (men, women, and children), and received large quantities of provisions for herself and her workforce, was also known by the official name Apama, appearing on the Persepolis Fortification tablets under the Elamite spelling Abbamuš (previously interpreted as an unknown title).²¹ Irdabama is only one of the better-attested Persian women whose economic activity speaks to considerable autonomy and authority of royal and noble women.

Apama's name and her high status among the Persian nobility carried the potential for significant economic clout. The marriage of Achaimenid daughters to satraps was common practice, part of the process of building up loyalties and social reciprocity among the political leadership of the empire, and such women's dowries included land as well as portable wealth.²² In addition, as mentioned, the satraps themselves often had family connections to the Achaimenid clan, and for the more powerful ones their satrapies were heritable, along with estates granted by the kings.²³ As daughter of a satrap and, probably, a royal princess, Apama would have inherited considerable wealth, including landed estates, and her predecessors among the royal Achaimenid women owned multiple estates across the empire.²⁴ Alexander supplied dowries (*proikes*) to the wives at Susa,²⁵ meaning that he may have confiscated the estates that normally made up their dowries, perhaps a part cause of the Macedonian husbands' later dissatisfaction with their Persian wives. Apama, alongside any siblings, was due to receive family property including estates in the Baktrian-Sogdian satrapy which had been expropriated by the Macedonians. Given her father Spitamenes' prominence as the last Persian rival to Alexander, his lands probably became property of the king. A comparable case is

18 Shahbazi 1985, 150–1; Brosius 1996, 78, 185. For Barsine, see Carney 1996, 572–3.

19 *1 Esdras* 4.9; Jos. *AJ* 11.49.

20 On the pejorative aspect of *pallake*, see Brosius 1996, 31, 191.

21 Brosius 1996, 129–44, 185.

22 Brosius 1996, 70 ff.; Llewellyn-Jones 2013, 111 ff.

23 Briant 1984, 75–6; 2002, 338–40, 461–3.

24 For example, Parysatis owned estates in Syria, Babylonia, and Media, and Artystone several estates in Persis, Brosius 1996, 123, 125–9.

25 Arr. 7.4.8.

that of the great Spithridatid estate near Zeleia, which after the battle of the Granicus entered the *chora basilike* and was eventually inherited by Antiochos II.²⁶ For the duration of Alexander's campaign, Apama and her relatives looked on as their estates and tenants transferred into his personal possession, probably placed under interim supervision by his new satraps, who were Persian rivals who had capitulated either to the new king or newcomer Macedonians.

Until Spitamenes' death late in 328, Apama and her relatives must have lived in a fortress secured against the Macedonians, as did the family of Oxyartes at the Rock of Sogdia, and she may even have been there herself, since we are told other families had fled to it for safety.²⁷ After the defeat of the Baktrian and Sogdian resistance, the surrender of Oxyartes and Roxane's marriage, a similar relationship with a Macedonian as his 'country wife' would have been a likely fate for many daughters of the defeated, later confirmed in the elaborate mass marriage ceremony at Susa in 324.²⁸ On that occasion Apama was paired with Seleukos, a cavalry officer who had distinguished himself in India, and it may be that they had already formed a relationship, unless we suppose that Alexander had the time to play match-maker for all his commanders in 324.²⁹ Seleukos remained near the king in Babylonia and Media, probably partaking in the dispute at Opis, the campaign against the Cossaeans/Kassites and preparations for the expedition to Arabia, and he was present at Alexander's death.³⁰ Perdikkas made him commander of the Companion cavalry, or 'equestrian *chiliarch*', signalling his advance to the top of the Macedonian military hierarchy.³¹ Apama likely lived among the non-combatant personnel of the Macedonian army's baggage train. There she could assist Seleukos along with the other camp followers, a group whose role throughout history has been to prepare food, tend animals, produce and mend clothing and weapons, construct camps, nurse the wounded or ill, and attend to other personal concerns.³² Added to this list may be other activities conducted in the course of meeting the army's material needs, such as translating, supplying intelligence, and brokering different types of social arrangements between members of the camp and outsiders; for example Antigone of Pydna, prisoner of war and subsequent mistress of Philotas, spied on him for Alexander.³³ Ancient commentators on Alexander's baggage train drew attention to the luxurious abundance of artists, intellectuals, and entertainers he brought with him but overlooked the much greater number of other workers.³⁴ Diodorus' remarks about Phila, daughter of Antipatros and wife of Krateros and Demetrios, attest to the presence of high status women with the Macedonian army and their management of camp life in this exact period; Phila disciplined trouble-

26 Sekunda 1988, 186; Coşkun this volume; Ramsey, forthcoming.

27 Arr. 4.18.4.

28 Ath. 12.537b–e.

29 Arr. 7.4.6; 5.13.1, 4; 5.16.3.

30 Arr. 7.8.1–11.9, 15.1–3, 26.2.

31 Diod. 18.3.4; App. Syr. 57; Collins 2001, 278.

32 Wintjes 2012, 19; Loman 2004, 41, observes that men in the camp were needed to fight and slaves would require guarding, so women were ideal as non-combatant workers, also pp. 51–2.

33 Plut. *Alex.* 48; Loman 2004, 49 n. 107.

34 Ath. 12.539a.

makers, arranged marriages and dowries, and advocated for the falsely accused.³⁵ As wife of the equestrian *chiliarch* Apama would enjoy significant prestige, and with her satrapal background she was accustomed to undertake managerial duties and economic enterprises, such as those recorded for women like Phila and Irdabama.³⁶

Life took a more settled turn after Seleukos was appointed satrap of Babylonia in 320,³⁷ undoubtedly with living quarters in one of the ancient palaces of Babylon, a good place to raise a family. We are informed by the Babylonian King List that Antiochos I died on June 2, 261, according to Eusebius, at age fifty-four.³⁸ This would put his birth sometime in the second half of 316 or the first half of 315. The most recent dating for Seleukos' flight from Babylon is 316,³⁹ thus when Apama was pregnant with Antiochos. John Malalas names two daughters of Apama: Apama and Laodike, and it may be that they were older, born perhaps c.320 and c.318.⁴⁰ In addition to childrearing, Seleukos and Apama needed to bolster his political role with economic security. At some point Seleukos acquired an estate near Babylon along the Euphrates river, which he passed to his descendants.⁴¹ When he acquired it is unknown, but it would have made sense to invest in land while a satrap and obtain the material resources and wealth commensurate with his status. It is clear that during his four years as satrap Seleukos cultivated the Babylonians so that they would be inclined to favour his leadership, and the fact that Antigonos took issue with his management of accounts indicates that his efforts had encompassed fiscal matters, probably including the reallocation of royal lands to former and new owners.⁴²

Nothing specific is stated in the sources regarding the whereabouts of Apama and her children during the years of warfare until Seleukos regained control of Babylonia. There are three options: either they were somewhere with her family in the east, or they fled to Egypt with Seleukos, or they remained in Babylon. The contest of wills between Antigonos and Seleukos in 316 developed rapidly with little time for advance planning, such as would be involved in sending Apama to her relatives, nor was it clear at the outset that the dispute would escalate as it did. Seleukos' own flight to Egypt was precipitous and conducted with only fifty horsemen,⁴³ meaning that he wanted to move fast and avoid attracting attention, which presumably ruled out taking a heavily pregnant wife with him. Antigonos' initial reaction was relief that the problematic satrap was so easily panicked, though later he saw that there were problems with the scenario, and it was immediately clear that

35 Diod. 19.59.4.

36 Since Phila operated with her father and husband's coalition, enemies of Perdikkas and the bulk of the Macedonian royal army (where Seleukos served), it is probable that Apama did not cross paths with her until after Perdikkas was assassinated by his commanders, Diod. 18.36.5.

37 Diod. 18.39.6

38 Sachs and Wiseman 1954, obv. ll. 9–10; Eus. *Chron.* p. 249.

39 Meeus 2012, 77.

40 Malalas § 10; Ogden 1999, 119.

41 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 128, obverse ll. 3–6.

42 Diod. 19.91; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 10.

43 Diod. 19.55.5.

Seleukos wanted Babylonia back, and that his aims centred on reclaiming that territory.⁴⁴ Leaving his highly experienced wife behind would further those plans. Diodorus remarks that in 311 Seleukos recovered ‘the persons of his friends and children’ who had been living in the citadel at Babylon under guard by Antigonos’ garrison since 316.⁴⁵ The ‘citadel’ mentioned by Greek sources like Diodorus was probably the neighbourhood of the Südburg beside the Istar Gate or Nebuchadnezzar II’s Hauptburg, Nordburg, and Summer Palace in the north part of the city straddling the city wall. Babylonian records of the Hellenistic period do not distinguish between the structures, but do refer to the ‘royal palace’ used as a defensive complex and a repository for stockpiled goods, as well as a residence, presumably for the satrap.⁴⁶ Apama may have remained in this neighbourhood with the other families of the Macedonian soldiers, waiting to see how events played out and maintaining her ties with the native Babylonian leadership.

The picture of Apama’s life discernable from the Persian background and affairs under the early Successors reveals her to be well-equipped in the business of ruling, and of surviving and thriving through changeable and tense political situations. Other women in her position actively supervised the economic, familial and legal lives of their subordinates, including personal servants and families of soldiers. The implication of Demodamas of Miletos’ proposal to honour Apama is that she had assisted the Milesian troops during the years of Seleukos’ far eastern conquest. Robert emphasizes Baktria-Sogdia as Apama’s homeland in order to make his connection between her assistance and Demodamas’ appreciation, with the implication that she used her background and connections to help the Milesians. This would mean that she supplied intelligence on logistics and native politics, provided letters of introduction, called in old favours, arranged for provisions and housing out of her own resources in the region, or some combination of these things. Based on what we know of royal women’s estate management and interventions in camp life, it is also possible that Apama assisted the Milesian soldiers by resolving a dispute in the camp, giving financial aid, arranging marriages, and so forth. In doing so, she certainly accompanied Seleukos’ campaign. Appian characterizes Seleukos as a consummate statesman and strategist, using diplomacy as much as force to acquire and consolidate his sovereignty in the upper satrapies.⁴⁷ The indications are that he proceeded along the Persian and Alexandrine model, obtaining support from individual satraps and thereby gaining their satrapies.⁴⁸ Given the Achaimenid and Macedonian habits of sending a large contingent of non-combatants on campaign, for example the female relations of Dareios captured after the battle of Issos and

44 Diod. 19.5.1; Boiy 2004, 122 dismisses Diodorus’ account of Chaldaean prophecy as a late invention, a point agreed here; if Antigonos did send men after Seleukos’ party it was surely upon realization that Seleukos’ absence from Babylonia did not prevent his political plans for the region from continuing.

45 Diod. 19.91.4: σώματα τῶν φίλων καὶ τῶν παίδων.

46 Kuhrt 2001, 78–80, 84–5; Boiy 2004, 62, 93.

47 App. Syr. 55.

48 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 11–2.

their importance to Alexander's construal of his rulership in Asia,⁴⁹ the diplomatic nature of Seleukos' journey through the upper satrapies benefitted from Apama being present and working alongside.

Beyond recording her assistance of a relatively small group of Greek adherents, Demodamas' Milesian decree for Apama refers back to a period of intense political development and diplomatic networking for which she was a crucial player. Until 311, Apama was the wife of a satrap, but following the Babylonian war and take-over of Media in 308, she was consort to a man on the road to kingship. The point when he had successfully acquired dominance of Baktria-Sogdia and moved on to India coincides with the time when Babylonian scribes abandoned the regnal years of Alexander IV and began counting according to the years of '*Siluku lugal*': 305 BC (7 SE).⁵⁰ Apama's eastern homeland was the decisive power base, making her role as queenly consort the lynchpin for the establishment of Seleukid royal authority.⁵¹ According to the model developed by Gruen and others, the Diadochs' declarations of kingship followed demonstrations of conquest (at Salamis, in Egypt, in Asia) and of a stable succession (possessing an heir).⁵² For the latter aspect, Apama was also important as mother of that heir, since Antiochos was still a child in 305. For the former aspect, she was essential, since the level of stability among the upper satrapies under Seleukos points to a thorough political settlement there, not a series of token victories. Only a few people remained on the Diadoch political scene who possessed a direct connection back to the pre-conquest cohort of Achaimenid satraps and nobles: Apama, now *basilissa* of the Seleukid kingdom, and Amestris, daughter of Oxyathres the brother of Dareios III and *philos* of Alexander, who had been married to Krateros by Alexander but thereafter married Dionysios the ruler of Heracleia on the Pontus. When Dionysios died in 306 Amestris ruled Heracleia herself and then allied with Lysimachos, to whom she was briefly married from 302 to 300.⁵³ As further evidence of both women's involvement in the emerging Hellenistic political scene, they both had eponymous city foundations: Amestris founded Amastris in Paphlagonia in c. 300 and issued coins bearing the legend *AMASTRIOS BASILISSES*,⁵⁴ and several Apameias were located in Syria and Asia Minor. It is generally assumed that these Seleukid foundations originated solely with Apama's husband and son, but given Amestris' foundation and the personal ownership of villages and extensive estates by earlier Achaimenid women, it may be that Apama was more active in the establishment of these new cities, either by creating them herself or in supplying their lands and inhabitants.⁵⁵

49 Carney 1996, 569.

50 Sachs and Wiseman 1954, 205.

51 As a comparison for the queen's role in king-making, there is Phila's dispatch of royal insignia to Demetrius in 306 after his father declared himself king, Diod. 20.93.4.

52 Gruen 1985, 258–9; Billows 1990, 158; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 120; Bosworth 2002, 246–7, n. 3.

53 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.5; Diod. 20.109.6–7; Strab. 12.3.10; Brosius 1996, 78 n. 70.

54 Strab. 12.3.10; Cohen 1995, 383–4; Head 1911, 505–6; von Aulock 1967, Taf. 234, nos. 6798–9.

55 M. Brosius, personal commentary, April 2014.

Twenty years or so elapsed between the end of Spitamenes' insurgency in 328 and Apama's return to her homeland, and the evidence for that time is scarce. Initially the new satrap of Baktria was Artabazos, son of Pharnabazos and Apama (see above) and hereditary satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia until 352, when he went into exile in Macedon with Philip II until 345; a supporter of Dareios III after the Granikos, in 330 he rejected Bessus' claim of kingship and surrendered to Alexander.⁵⁶ Family connections on his mother's side place him among the web of Achaimenid royalty, in the same generation as Apama's parents. His daughters Barsine and Artakama/Apama therefore not only married Macedonians at Susa, but were likely some degree of cousins with Apama.⁵⁷ It is no surprise that the distaff side of the Persian leadership should be so connected to each other, and this network of relationships must have played into post-conquest politics of the satrapies. In 328 Artabazos requested retirement due to old age, and was replaced by the Macedonian Amyntas,⁵⁸ who retained this posting until Antipatros appointed Stasanor of Soli satrap of Baktria and Sogdia after Triparadeisos.⁵⁹ Alexander abandoned his policy of appointing native Iranian satraps after Artabazos, and only Oxyartes, his father-in-law, would obtain the high level position for the Paropamisos.⁶⁰ Thus even though certain major players like Spitamenes had been removed, the Persian, or at least the Baktrian-Sogdian leadership, remained a threat, and we must now recognize that women were integral to this. While Artabazos cited old age, another, more pressing reason for giving up his appointment was the political situation in Baktria, exacerbated by his familial connections. His parents had married c. 388, making him still quite young when he became satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia in 362, and therefore only nearly sixty in 328; it is probable that other factors guided his decision, such as negative reactions to the influence of his daughters.⁶¹ Elizabeth Carney suggests that Artabazos retired in response to Alexander's apparent preference of Roxane as wife over his daughter Barsine.⁶²

The other Macedonian husbands at Susa who preferred Macedonian women over their Persian wives were reacting to Alexander's scheme, a point long observed,⁶³ but citing racism as the cause misreads the situation. In addition to the possible economic concerns regarding confiscated dowries, the political activity of the wives must be considered, since they were all powerful princesses and daughters of satraps,⁶⁴ not a group of helpless war captives. They would have expected to use their marriages to restore access to hereditary lands and rights, and this activity would be far more likely to alienate their Diadoch husbands, whose political ambitions lay elsewhere. Herodotos' understanding of powerful women within the

56 Dandamayev 1986.

57 Cf. Briant 2002, 700.

58 Arr. 3.29.1; 4.17.3.

59 Diod. 18.39.6.

60 Arr. 6.15.3; Diod. 18.39.6.

61 Compare the ages of his contemporaries who were pursuing their careers: Antipatros (71 in 328), Antigonos (54 in 328), Oxyartes much have also been in his 50s.

62 Carney 1996, 575.

63 Cf. Macurdy 1932, 77.

64 Cf. Arr. 7.4.5–6.

Persian sphere had figured them as independent thinkers, forthright in their political intentions and pro-active in giving advice and strategic assessments to male leaders.⁶⁵ Allowing for the distorted view of powerful women wrought by Greek historiography, it does appear that Apama inherited a long tradition of female leadership, a point confirmed by the Persepolis documents. The scale of her husband's success and her own queenship speaks to considerable engagement with the pre-existing political networks, mobilization of assets in Asia, and a lasting cooperation between husband and wife. The presence of a Seleucid queen in the process of territorial conquest is mirrored in the life of Laodike III, whose diplomatic work in western Asia Minor after 213 augmented Antiochos III's expansionism and the consolidation of allegiance from new subject cities.⁶⁶ While this does not map exactly onto circumstances in Baktria-Sogdia, the Milesians' honours for Apama did set a precedent in the west for celebrating a Seleukid queen for her diplomatic and beneficent actions.

II. STRATONIKE

Stratonike is possibly the most famous of early Seleukid queens because of her second marriage to Antiochos I, and the remarkable title given her in Babylonian documents attests to her real and enduring prestige. In 268 BC (43 SE) she was celebrated on Antiochos' foundation cylinder for the Ezida temple in Borsippa as 'Astartanikku, his wife, the queen', using the Babylonian titles normally applied to goddesses.⁶⁷ This text used a play-on-words moniker for her, highlighting her sexuality and power.⁶⁸ Her special identity continued years after she became the widowed queen mother, up to the day of her death in Tašrīt 58 SE (27 Sept.–25 Oct. 254 BC), when a Babylonian astronomer-priest recorded that 'that month it was heard in Babylon: queen Stratonike died in Sardis'.⁶⁹ Carney has demonstrated how the conflation of queens and royal concubines with Aphrodite was a vehicle for early Hellenistic experimentation with queenly identity and royal femininity, and such was also the case for Stratonike's mother Phila.⁷⁰ The unique naming of Stratonike as a sex goddess represents this experiment pushed further than for most early royal women. Her sexual relationships with two kings, a father and son, warranted the attention, but Stratonike's real status derived from the royal heritage she received from Phila, her father Demetrios Poliorketes, paternal grandfather Antigonos Monophthalmos and maternal grandfather Antipatros, all bar the latter bearing

65 Dewald 1980, 13; notable are Tomyris (Hdt. 1.205–6), Artemisia (7.99, 8.68–9, 8.101–3), Phereclides (4.162).

66 Ramsey 2011.

67 The titles are *hīratsu* 'his wife/divine consort' and *šarrat* 'queen/heavenly queen', col. II, l. 27: Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991, 77–8; Kosmin 2014a.

68 Del Monte 1997, 41–2; Kosmin 2014a. The name combines Aštarte, the Syrian goddess associated with Istar, Aphrodite and courtly romances about Stratonike, with an orthographical variation of the Babylonian verbal noun *ntku*, 'sexual intercourse'.

69 AD -253 obv. B 6': *Astartatniqe* GAŠAN/*šarrat*.

70 Carney 2011, 201–3.

royal titles. With this lineage she possessed an extraordinary potential for ruling power, hence her marriage to Antiochos, not for passion but for the ruling legitimacy she brought him, consolidating Seleukid succession and continuing the Antigonid alliance which had initially recommended her to Seleukos.⁷¹

Statonike married Seleukos c.300 at Rhosos in Syria (mod. Arsuz-Uluçınar, Turkey),⁷² after he proposed the union to reinforce his new power in the west following the battle of Ipsos.⁷³ As is clear from the Milesian decree of 299/8, Apama was still alive at this time and active, and so the decision to marry Stratonike was not a matter of replacing a deceased or 'deposed' queen but confirming Seleukos' supremacy in Syria and opening the way for his further westward expansion. Stratonike's father himself had several wives and concubines; Phila was present at the Rhosos wedding and shortly departed to attend to matters in Cilicia, whereupon another wife, Deidameia, joined him. At the same time, Demetrios was arranging to marry Ptolemais the daughter of Ptolemy I, with his new son-in-law Seleukos as their matchmaker.⁷⁴ It was quite within reason for Seleukos to have two royal and politically active wives, and a great advantage to alliance-building for their growing kingdom.

The main evidence for Stratonike's public activity during her life comes from the *hieropoioi* inventory inscriptions from Delos, recording a series of dedications she made on the island. The earliest inventory dates to 279 BC and lists the queen's gifts as two *phialai* at the Artemision and two large silver *kraters* at the new Apollo temple. Also at the Apollo temple, a king Seleukos dedicated a silver trireme weighing 1,544 drachmas.⁷⁵ These gifts were relisted in later years' inventories,⁷⁶ and 279 may not be the actual date of the donations but another relisting of earlier dedications, since Seleukos her first husband was already deceased, but on the other hand, this may be Seleukos her eldest son by Antiochos, who was co-ruling king with his father from 280/279.⁷⁷

Stratonike also dedicated collections of jewellery at the Artemis and Apollo temples, and the placement of these items in the inventories – at separate but nearby sections from the items already described – indicates deposition on separate occasions and into separate collections.⁷⁸ The nature of the new dedications bears this

71 Cf. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991, 84–5.

72 Cohen 2006, 136–7.

73 Plut. *Demetr.* 31.3–32.2; Malalas 8.198.

74 Plut. *Demetr.* 32.3.

75 *IG* XI.2 161, face B, ll. 15, 77–8; & 162, face B, l. 13. This king Seleukos also dedicated a *batiakion* cup at the Apollo temple, listed in the 273 inventory alongside his earlier trireme gift and Stratonike's *phialai*, *IG* XI.2 199, face B, ll. 8–10.

76 Cf. *IG* XI.2 164 (276 BC), face A, ll. 201, 57; *IG* XI.2 186 (300–275 BC), ll. 10–11; *IG* XI.2 190 (300–275 BC), l. 5; *IG* XI.2 199 (273 BC), face B, ll. 8–10, 40; *IG* XI.2 203 (269 BC), face B, l. 42; *IG* XI.2 219 (c. 265 BC), face B, l. 49.

77 He is titled king (*šar*) on the Borsippa Cylinder: Kuhrt/Sherwin-White 1991: 76–7, l. 25. For his co-rulership and title in other Babylonian sources, Kugler 1922, 312.

78 The inventories for the Delian Independence period (314–166 BC) tended to integrate new dedications into the listing of older treasury contents rather than group them together separately, Hamilton 200, 18–9.

out, since they are personal accoutrements, not ritual wares. Their first appearance is in the 276 BC inventory. Prominent are the gold anklets belonging to her father Demetrios, two necklaces, and some small *phialai*⁷⁹, which are always listed together as a set, often along with an arm-band, two rouge-pots, a finger ring, and a gold mould, all of which was deposited at the Artemision.⁸⁰ The anklets, necklaces, armband, and rouge-pots are listed together in an inventory from 250, and at a later section of that inscription is itemized a larger and more expensive set of dedications by her at the Apollo temple. These are a gold crown for a statue weighing 654 drachmas, three gold crowns for statues of the Graces weighing 31 drachmas, a collar or necklace (*katheter*)⁸¹ weighing 109 drachmas, 4 obols, and a gold ring with a sardion seal of Apollo weighing 10 drachmas, 2 obols, the latter two items dedicated to Leto. This second set is noteworthy for the repeated naming of 'queen Stratonike the daughter of king Demetrios' as its dedicator, a detail which confirms her identity as Stratonike wife of Antiochos, and not their daughter Stratonike who married Demetrios II in the 250s.

Stratonike emphasized the connection to her birth family in these valuable dedications, giving items inherited from her father (and undoubtedly her mother also) and drawing attention to her parents in the dedicatory inscriptions she placed on some items. Certain of the later inventories specify the inscriptions upon a gold ribbon (*tainia*) of the sort used for a diadem and a gold pendant necklace (*hormos*) set with stones, both reading 'queen Stratonike daughter of king Demetrios and queen Phila'.⁸² Given how she is now regarded as pre-eminent Seleukid queen, the one who bridged the periods of empire building and dynastic continuity of her two husbands, it seems surprising that she herself should concentrate her attention on commemorating her birth family, not her marital connections.⁸³ In later years, the persona of Stratonike and cult of Aphrodite Stratonikis were employed by her grandson Seleukos II and the city of Smyrna as a rallying point for a peace agreement,⁸⁴ but there is little direct evidence that she during her life worked in the same way as Apama had, in stabilizing Seleukid dominance and creating accord among subordinate communities. Rather, the evidence for Stratonike's public actions has her operating on the geopolitical flank, facing off against rival Ptolemaic royalty and maintaining a close connection to her birth family.

In 280 Ptolemy II instituted a Ptolemaieia vase-festival, so-called for the founding donation of *phialai*,⁸⁵ on Delos in conjunction with his securing the League of Islanders' participation in his iso-Olympian Ptolemaieia at Alexandria.⁸⁶ At this time, the Antigonids were keeping a low profile during the Celtic invasion of

79 *phialia*, Hamilton 2000, 350.

80 *IG* XI,2 164, face A, ll. 74–5; 199, ll. 51–2; 261, ll. 4–5; 287, face B, ll. 20–1.

81 Hamilton 2000, 352 n. 15.

82 The ribbon: *ID* 380, 385, 421, 422, 423, 439, 442; the pendant: *ID* 442, 443, 444, 461, 469.

83 Macurdy 1932, 81. Indeed, Bruneau lists Stratonike under the Antigonids in his study of royal dedications on Delos, 1970, 545–50.

84 Austin 174. See also Ma 2013, 85 for Stratontikis Aphrodite's temple as venue for honorific statues.

85 Shulhof 1908, 106; Bruneau 1970, 522.

86 *Syll.*³ 390 = Austin² no. 256; Buraselis 1982, 143.

Macedon and Greece, and the Seleukids were reeling from Seleukos I's assassination and a rebellion in Syria.⁸⁷ They soon, however, reconfirmed the alliance established through Stratonike with the marriage of her elder daughter by Seleukos, Phila, to her brother Antigonos Gonatas in ca. 278. Delos featured as a venue for commemorating this event, signalling new Antigonid-Seleukid pressure on Ptolemy. Earlier around the time of her first marriage, the Delians had commissioned Telesinos of Athens to create a marble statue of Stratonike, along with a bronze statue of Asklepios, both placed the Apollo sanctuary.⁸⁸ Now Phila was honoured with a statue in the Artemision, and in the base inscription she is called *basilissa*.⁸⁹ Stratonike dedicated the jewellery collection including Demetrios' anklets at the same time, drawing attention to the man who had once controlled the Aegean and the continued prominence and goodwill of his descendants. Dedications by a queen Phila appear in the inventories for the Apollo temple dated 166–140.⁹⁰ The only two attested Hellenistic queens named Phila are Stratonike's mother and daughter, and the disordered nature of the Delian inventories makes it difficult to identify this Phila, but she may be Stratonike's daughter following her mother's example. Later, when another Seleukid princess, Laodike daughter of Seleukos IV, married another Antigonid (Perseus) she also received a statue at Delos, and praise for her 'excellence, reverence for the temple, and goodwill to the Delians'.⁹¹ This suggests that she emulated her foremothers and made a gift at the island, playing out the same pattern of honorific exchange on the occasion of her marriage.

Stratonike's linking of Seleukids and Antigonids at Delos versus Ptolemaic influence in the Aegean in the mid-270s fits with the build-up to the First Syrian War, which concerned politics in the west more than the possession of Palestine. It is worth noting that the Babylonian documentation puts Stratonike in the western theatre of conflict at Sardis in autumn 274; we may certainly interpret her location in the citadel there as for security purposes, but she and the military commander with her could also use Sardis as a base of operations.⁹² The careers of Stratonike's younger daughters, Apama, married to Magas of Kyrene in the 270s,⁹³ and Stratonike, married to Phila and Antigonos' son Demetrios II in the mid-250s,⁹⁴ emphasize just how essential the Antigonid alliance was and mirror the fluctuating rivalry with Ptolemy II. The Antigonid side of the family also maintained a strong connection with Delos, with Antigonos Gonatas' grand stoa and Progonoi monument, built between 260 and 248 and dominating the landscape of the Apollo sanc-

87 OGIS 219 = Austin² 162, ll. 4–8

88 Durrbach 1976, no. 16 = IG XI.4 514; cf. IG XI.4 1201 for another statue made by Telesinos. Ma and others identify Stratonike's statue, an *agalma*, as a cult-statue for ruler cult: Ma 2013, 19 n. 18 and see Ramsey 2011, 526 n. 44.

89 Durrbach 1976, no. 37 = IG XI.4 1098.

90 ID 1439 fr. bc, col. I.1, ll. 78–81 and 1450A, 57–8; Hamilton 2000, 154 (Apollo D, ll. 140–1). The dedications are a moonstone-decorated pin on a small wooden column and a sphere in a case with chains.

91 Durrbach 1976, no. 70 = IG XI.4 1074.

92 Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 34–6; AD -273 B rev. 29'.

93 See McAuley in this volume.

94 Just. 28.1.2; Eus. *Chron.* 1.249; Grainger 2010, 132–3.

tuary.⁹⁵ Antigonos also founded two vase-festivals, the Stratonikeia and Antigoneia, in 253 soon after his sister's death.⁹⁶ It has been argued that he was commemorating his defeat of the Ptolemaic fleet at Kos c. 261, which shifted the balance of power in the Aegean.⁹⁷ Antigonos' double festivals countered the Ptolemaic dominance in the Cyclades, and further vase festival foundations by each side – Ptolemaieia II in 249, Ptolemaieia III in 246 and the Antigonid Soteria and Paneia in 245 – mirror their continued rivalry.⁹⁸ Thus at the mid-century and after her death, Stratonike's persona still carried weight for her birth family's diplomatic profile, and for her children insofar as they pursued the continuation of their alliance with the Antigonids.

One factor shaping Stratonike's choices worth considering is the level of risk involved. At first glance she seems not to have faced many risky situations, but that assumption only rests on the lack of reported failure in any political schemes. The 270s represent a high point for Stratonike when her agency in linking the Antigonids with the Seleukids was productive: she made a series of dedications at Delos marking this role, her eldest daughter married her brother and received honours also at Delos, her eldest son paid his respects to the same locale. At the same time, the First Syrian War, if nothing else, made explicit the continued Seleukid push for dominance in the west, initially marked by her marriage to Seleukos I, and meant that Stratonike personally was well-positioned to succeed, through either of her families, in exercising political influence at the centre of events. Her emphatic identification with her birth family at Delos was a good strategy for managing the alliance of her marriage and honouring her own inherited ruling legitimacy and authority, rather than completely subsuming herself in the forms of Seleukid dynastic promotion, in the manner represented by her inclusion in the cultic honours to Antiochos by the *koinon* of the Ionians between 266 and 261.⁹⁹

During the mid-260s Stratonike faced a fraught situation when her eldest son Seleukos disappeared from the, admittedly, extremely fragmentary record, and her younger son Antiochos took his place. According to Justin Seleukos was killed by Antiochos I, presumably for treachery regarding the succession.¹⁰⁰ This has been exposed as an ancient romanticization of a straightforward family tragedy: Seleukos the elder son probably died of an illness sometime in late August or September 266,

95 Dillon and Baltes 2013, 227–8; Courby 1912, 74 ff.; Durrbach 1976, nos. 35 & 36 = *IG* XI,4 1095 & 1096.

96 *IG* XI,2 287, B, ll. 124–6; Durrbach 1976, 24, 42; *ID* 366 face A, l. 54 (207 BC). See also Cohen 1995, 101; Shulhof 1908, 106.

97 Buraselis 1982, 147–51 (argues for a date of 155); Reger 1985 (argues for a date of 261); Adams 2010, 221.

98 Bruneau 1970, 561–2, 579–81; Buraselis 1982; for the rivalries see Grainger 2010 and Coşkun, this volume.

99 *OGIS* 222; *IErythrai* II, 504; Austin² no. 169. Based on the Babylonian information for Seleukos the son's death in early autumn 266, this decree must date to after that point, since it names Antiochos the son with his parents (see following note).

100 Trogus *Prolog.* 26; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 37, 127. That the sole source for Seleukos' death is Justin's *Epitome* of Trogus poses a problem, given Justin's own narratological treatment of royal deaths, see Bartlett, this volume.

perhaps from an epidemic similar to the one mentioned in the Babylonian astronomical diary for the autumn of 267,¹⁰¹ and his younger brother stepped into his place as co-ruler with their father. Both sons are listed as co-rulers with their father in the dating formula for a Babylonian contract of August 266, and Antiochos appears alone with his father in a document dated October 266. The suggestion is that a transition between the two sons was initiated once Seleukos fell ill.¹⁰² Antiochos III's grief at the death of his eldest son in 193 testifies to the family and courtly upheaval upon the death of an heir, one which also attracted rumours of assassination by the father and favouritism for a younger son.¹⁰³ If indeed the king Seleukos whose dedication of a silver trireme lay alongside Stratonike's *philai* in the treasury of Apollo was her eldest son, it was perfectly fitting for her to encourage him in his expressions of beneficence, just as Apama did with Antiochos I at Didyma, and the positive references to Stratonike and Seleukos her son on the Borsippa Cylinder also fit the picture of a cordial and effective family regime. Public representations of familial concord such as these can be genuine as well as propagandistic, and Seleukos' death and the loss of the strategies planned with his kingship in mind, would have been a serious set-back for his parents and the royal court, even with the younger son Antiochos ready and able to fill his place. Identifying the nature of Stratonike's influence over her elder and younger sons is nearly impossible; what can be observed is that in the place where she devoted her attention (Delos), only her elder son makes an appearance. The years of the Second Syrian War could have benefitted from the same type of actions as during the first war, seen in Stratonike the daughter's marriage in the 250s to Demetrios II and Stratonike's ongoing dedications at Delos, but Antiochos II's solution to the conflict, to forge a marriage alliance with the Ptolemies, was a marked departure from the previous policy shaped by his mother.

While queen Apama's diplomacy was regime-building, resolving problems and grounding Seleukid sovereignty over the east in the older forms of rule, Stratonike operated in a sphere of escalating conflict, with mounting risks as parties marshalled their resources for the competition over Asia Minor. This – the centre of an incipient conflict – was the natural place for diplomacy in the Hellenistic world, and by participating in foreign affairs during the two Syrian Wars, Stratonike faced all the risks concomitant with the type of self-interested and dominance-seeking interactions occurring among the kingdoms. The later phase of this took place during a little-understood, but undoubtedly painful, period of succession transition within her immediate family. Stratonike's enduring reputation as a good queen, albeit more memorable for her romantic characterization as a twice-over bride than for her later career, is testament to the power she wielded and the status she brought to the Seleukids through her diplomatic action, although this was not a point for much celebration during her life.

101 For the sickness in Babylon, Sept.-Nov. 267 BC: AD -266 B obv. 15'; Del Monte 1997, 37.

102 Del Monte 1995, 434–5, 441–4; Del Monte 1997, 37 and 228; Savalli-Lestrade 2003b, 73. The tablet attesting the three co-rulers is *BM* 55437, obv. 4–5' and rev. 26–7'. The attestation of Antiochos as the only co-ruler with his father is *CR* 49 115 obv. 1–2; Del Monte 1997, 228–9.

103 Livy 25.15.2–7.

III. QUEENLY DIPLOMACY

One way to explain Hellenistic queenly activity is within the paradigm of the 'diplomatic marriage alliance', and Stratonike's marriage to Seleukos or Berenike Phernophoros' to Antiochos II are examples of how this may be imagined to work: the woman changes hands in order to reify a peace agreement between her father and husband (or in the case of Seleukos and Antiochos, an agreement between father and son). Elsewhere in this volume the point has been argued, from a variety of cases, that the marriages of these princesses and royal women meant more than moving them around as tokens of reconfigured male relationships, and that the women were in and of themselves agents for ruling legitimacy. Also raised are questions regarding the role of these women's loyalty to their birth families versus their new affinal connections, and to what degree a division or tension in their loyalties affected the policies of each family toward the other.¹⁰⁴

Interpreting Apama and Stratonike's actions on the basis of what they reveal about each queen's family loyalties produces significantly different attitudes. Apama emerges out of the historical background for Achaimenid women, Macedonian army life, and post-Alexander politics as a strong regime-builder, and her supervision and gatekeeping during Seleukos' rise to kingship fits the Milesian decree in her honour. Yet aligning with her husband meant that she assisted his subjugation of her people and lands, seemingly going against the avidly expressed desires of her late father. One motivating factor worth noting is the violence of the post-Alexander years, including the deaths of his Persian wives. Rather than succumb to the political upheaval, Apama drew upon her resources as an heir of the Persian royal and noble system to secure the rule of her husband. The concentration of Stratonike's public appearance within the Antigonid milieu introduces a *frisson* to the notion of her voiceless compliance with Seleukos' schemes for dynastic succession. In her public appearances on Delos she is distant from her affines; in her own words she was the daughter of a king and a queen, not wife of two kings. Clearly the evidence is not fulsome and does not provide the personal motivations for such decisions or the emotional attachments present in these relationships, and neither can we say that Stratonike never attended to Seleukid interests nor Apama to Baktrian ones. The Antiochos Cylinder's portrayal of Stratonike shows that her persona as divinely appealing consort got good traction in Babylonia, at least, and she could have exploited it elsewhere. Equally, in Baktria Apama likely intended to restore the fortunes of her family and its supporters as much as it was possible, and in this she followed the traditions of Achaimenid royal mothers, for whom the protection of their children in the royal court was paramount and who actively defended their sons' succession and rule.¹⁰⁵ The enduring quiet of the eastern empire over the next decades suggests a satisfactory settlement of political and economic matters for all parties during the 308–305 campaign, and from Apama's perspec-

104 See Harders, Almagor, McAuley, Wenghofer/Houle in this volume.

105 Brosius 1996, 113–9.

tive, this was her legacy for her son Antiochos I, heir to her own family's authority in the eastern empire.

The two queens interacted with subjects and neighbours of the Seleukid kingdom in multiple modes, conforming to local traditions of giving honour as well as asserting current policies of the royal court and their own plans. They could be both the detail-oriented benefactor and advocate and the kingmaker and destabilizer of foreign rivals. The idea of tension in royal female loyalties is then better expressed as a tension of identities, a dynamic of multiple *personae* adopted to suit different contingencies. The diplomacy of these queens went beyond building alliances between their kin groups at the point of marriage; it was the process of cultivating the character and public image for both their families, birth and affinal, to fit each one's dynastic and political needs. As the audience and circumstances changed, so too did the queen's persona, since her identity was the crux in a complicated web of kin relationships which all bore their own obligations for performance: protective mother, likeminded consort, honourable daughter. The choice of which role to play when was ultimately a political one, since each of a queen's potential roles bore with it both negative and positive ramifications. The diplomatic choices of Apama and Stratonike were then a matter of balancing their identities against their own and their relatives' political ambitions and the risks and opportunities of their circumstances.

II. REPRESENTATION, VISIBILITY AND DISTORTION OF SELEUKID QUEENSHIP

LAODIKE I, BERENIKE PHERNOPHOROS, DYNASTIC MURDERS, AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE THIRD SYRIAN WAR (253–246 BC)

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the ancient and modern literary tradition the first wife of Antiochos II, Laodike I, appears as the prototype of the evil queen. All of her misdeeds hinge on the alleged complications ensuing from Antiochos' second marriage with the Ptolemaic princess Berenike after the Second Syrian War (260–253 BC). However, the widespread view that Laodike was divorced or demoted to being a concubine does not withstand scrutiny. It can further be shown that her son Seleukos II was already co-ruling king when Antiochos died in 246. With this, all allegations of her having murdered her husband, Berenike, and her stepson in order to secure the succession of Seleukos appear to be baseless. The search for the source of Laodike's 'bad press' leads to the court of Ptolemy III Euergetes, who was needed to cover up his less noble reasons for the war. But it was Phylarchos who stood at the beginning of the historiographical tradition: he opted for the more dramatic version in which Antiochos' bigamy provoked the bloodthirst of Laodike and thus the outbreak of the Third Syrian War. In this way, Laodike became a model of a royal woman who transgressed social boundaries.

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite minor variation, our ancient authorities agree that Antiochos II's wife Laodike I was the prototype of the power-hungry and bloodthirsty queen. It would appear that she missed no opportunity to extend her power, even if this came at the price of perverting the most sacred of family relations. Altogether, she is accused of murdering her husband, killing the rival queen Berenike and her little son, fraudulently proclaiming her eldest son Seleukos II as the new king, only to then stir up his younger brother Antiochos Hierax towards usurping power in Asia Minor soon thereafter. While the tone has become less moralistic in modern accounts, the allegations have often remained the same. An exception is perhaps the murder of her husband, which ever more scholars tend to discard. Otherwise, the dated account of A. Bouché-Leclercq still captures the general sentiment towards Laodike:

“Laodice commence la série des intrigues criminelles que nous verrons se multiplier bientôt dans les familles souveraines de l'époque, par le fait de reines et princesses enfiévrées d'ambition et jalouses même de leurs enfants.”¹

1 Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 107. – On Laodike and the death of her husband, see below, with n. 6.

However, for nearly a century, there has been a growing minority of scholars that argue for the necessity of revising our judgements on the queen, with K.-J. Beloch and G.H. Macurdy figuring as pioneers. Accordingly, Laodike and her similars (such as Kleopatra Thea or Kleopatra VII) only did what had become the norm among their male counterparts since the days of Alexander the Great: they vigorously defended their own (or partly their children's) dynastic interests when they themselves could not count on the mercy of their opponents.² While such apologetic voices remained isolated in the first half of the 20th century, more recent scholarship has gone even further. Several colleagues have more systematically studied the agency of Hellenistic queens, providing us with much better explanations of the socio-political contexts in which Laodike and her fellows acted. Such works strongly plead to overcome the narrow and seemingly apolitical framework of dynastic families in which they are portrayed by ancient authors, and which in turn have been highly receptive of short-sighted misogynist projections.³

But, paradoxically, when it comes to the violent actions themselves – which we may call ‘crimes’ as much according to ancient as to modern standards – even these more nuanced and partly apologetic works have ultimately done little to question the allegations laid against Laodike, but rather have simply repeated most of them in a different light. This chapter, in contrast, will argue that probably all of her purported misdeeds ought to be understood as distortions partly designed at the court of the Ptolemies to be disseminated among the subjects (I allow myself to speak of ‘propaganda’ in such cases), and partly caused by the conflict between Antiochos Hierax and Seleukos II. Most importantly, however, they were invented and developed further by moralizing and dramatizing historiographers.

In order to disentangle the various threads, first the most common version of the traditional narrative of the years 253 to 227 and its basis in the ancient sources will be set out briefly. Next, several difficulties will be discussed and alternative interpretations offered in a sequence of sections arranged either chronologically or thematically. In this way, most of what we thought we knew about Laodike will be shown to be fictitious. At the same time, a more plausible course of events for the seven years preceding the death of Antiochos II and its immediately subsequent developments will emerge.

II. TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE OF THE YEARS 253 TO 227 BC

The peace following the Second Syrian War (260–253 BC) was sealed by the marriage of Antiochos II Theos with Berenike, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (April 252 BC). Antiochos was ultimately succumbing, if not to military whim, then at least to the immeasurable dowry; hence Berenike was nicknamed *Phernophoros*, the ‘Dowry-Bringer’. Following the (isolated) allegation of Porphyry of

2 Macurdy 1932, 1–12 (introduction, with reference to Beloch IV 1st ed., p. 675–6, with n. 1); 4 and 86–7 (Laodike). Cf. also the introduction to this volume.

3 For the general trend, see again the introduction to this volume. For the Seleukids, cf. Nourse 2002; Bielman-Sánchez 2002/3; Ramsey forthcoming and ca. 2016; Widmer ca. 2016.

Tyre, most scholars believe that he promised to downgrade the status of his first wife Laodike to that of a concubine, if not outright divorce her.⁴ Antiochos thus apparently raised the expectation that his children from Laodike would be disgraced, in order to allow his future offspring from Berenike to succeed him to the throne.⁵

Antiochos II passed away a few years later, probably in July 246 BC. The ancient (and modern)⁶ tradition is divided as to whether he died a natural death, which is implied in the reports of Pompeius Trogus (as represented by Justin and the *Prologi*) and Polyainos,⁷ or whether he was murdered by Laodike, as is most commonly held.⁸ Porphyry even seems to have followed alternative versions at different times, the former in his *Chronicle* (as excerpted by Eusebios), the latter in his *Against the Christians*, a fragment of which has come down to us in Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel*. As the most detailed version of the violent tradition, the latter offers the basis for the sinister narratives which currently prevail: first the disgrace of Laodike and her sons, then their rehabilitation, followed by the assas-

- 4 Hieron. in *Dan.* 11.6–9 = Porphyry. *Contra Christianos*, *FGrH* 260 F 43 ll. 11–2 speaks of Laodike as *concubina*, whereas no other source mentions that the status of Laodike or her sons was affected. Divorce is assumed, e.g., by Bevan 1902, 158; 177–9; Macurdy 1932, 83; Walbank 1988, 291; Brodersen 1989, 201; Ogden 1999, 128; Ma 1999, 44; Shipley 2000, 289; Virgilio 2003, 152–4; Grainger 2010, 137; Kosmin 2014a, 310 n. 74; implicitly Bielman-Sánchez 2003, 58. ‘Repudiation’, ‘disgrace’ or according terms are used by Will 1979, I 239; 242; Heinen 1984, 419; Hölbl 1994/2001, 42 (“verstoßen”); Lightman and Lightman 2000, 183; Huss 2001, 338–9; Ager 2003, 42; Duyrat 2005, 229–30; Ehling 2003, 306; Schmitt 2005, 966; Errington 2008, 120. The rejection of Seleukos as successor against the custom of the *primogenitura* is taken for granted by Lozano 2005, 72. Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 90 denies divorce: “Laodice passait au rang de reine douairière, diminuée sans doute, mais non disqualifiée”, though erroneously ascribing the cult decreed by Antiochos III for Laodike IV to her; but he still considers Laodike was first abandoned and then in need of having her status officially reaffirmed in 246 BC (91). For a more outright rejection by Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 693–7; 701–2, see below, section III. Plischke 2014, 222 tries to harmonise the traditions: the rejection of Laodike had been agreed on in 253, but was never fully put into practice; she was only sent to Ephesos with her children. Undecided between polygamy and divorce is Grainger 2010, 133 (more inclined towards the latter) and 2014, 180–2 (with preference for the former). – For further modern references, see below, n. 45. On the date of the marriage, see below, n. 48.
- 5 Polyæn. 8.50, by stressing the young age of the son of Berenike, implies that Antiochos II would otherwise have preferred to be succeeded by him. See also below, section VIII, on the inscription of Kildara. – For the date, cf. Plischke 2014, 224 with n. 362.
- 6 On the date, see below with n. 58. – Some credence is given to the rumours, e.g., by Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 92–3; Brodersen 1989, 201; Hölbl 1994/2001, 46; Lightman and Lightman 2000, 183; Errington 2008, 120; Toye, *BNJ* 260 *ad* F 32.6. Undecided remain Bevan 1902, 179–80; Will 1979, I 249; Heinen 1984, 420; Ogden 1999, 129. *Contra* Ehling 2003, 307. Primo 2009, 123–4 is aware of the conceptual context, but does not comment on the veracity of the claim. For a rebuttal, see below, section VI.
- 7 Armenian version of Eusebios excerpts from Porphyry's *Chronicle*, *FGrH* 260 F 32.6 (sickness); Trog. *prol.* 26: *ut mortuo rege Antiocho filius eius Seleucus Callinicus regnum acceperit*; Just. 27.1.1; Polyæn. 8.50.
- 8 Phylarch. *FGrH* 81 F 24; Val. Max. 9.14; Plin. *NH* 7.53; App. *Syr.* 65.344–5; Porphyry./Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, ll. 14–5: *quae metuens ambigui viri animum, ne Berenicen reduceret, virum per ministros veneno interfecit*.

sination of her husband, allegedly with the intention to prevent any further reversal of her fortune.⁹ While our sources also have different stories to tell as to how the succession of Seleukos II came about, they tend to agree that Laodike ‘played dirty’ by having Berenike and her son killed, too.¹⁰ The only exception is Justin, according to whom Seleukos was the culprit, though he was at least encouraged in this crime by his mother.¹¹

At any rate, Ptolemy III Euergetes invaded Syria either to avenge his sister and nephew, or, if indeed he was called upon early enough, with the intention of rescuing them.¹² With an amazing speed (*advolat*), Ptolemy arrived in Seleukeia in Pieria “with all his forces”. Based on Justin’s narrative, some scholars have suggested that this was in September or October 246 BC.¹³ At a time when most subjects of the Seleukid territories would still believe that at least Berenike, if not also her son, was still alive, he was welcomed as liberator in Syria.¹⁴ Thus the Third Syrian War (246–241 BC) began. Contrary to the previous conflicts between the two major successor empires, in this instance the sources neatly complement each other: they form the basis for a straightforward narrative that allows us to clearly attribute political responsibility and moral guilt, as is duly reflected in modern accounts.¹⁵

- 9 Porphyry (see the preceding ns.) probably used different sources, although the discrepancy may – in theory – rather go back to Eusebios, who is believed to have been the intermediary between Porphyry’s *Contra Christianos* and Jerome; cf. Jacoby (*ad F* 33–61, p. 877) and Toye, *BNJ* 260 (introduction to the commentary), but both without reference to Laodike. – At any rate, some credibility is given to the rumours, e. g., by Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 92–3; Hölbl 1994/2001, 46; Lightman and Lightman 2000, 183; Errington 2008, 120. Undecided remain Bevan 1902, 179–80 and Primo 2009, 123–4. For a discussion, see below, section IV.
- 10 App. *Syr.* 65.345 and Jerome/Porphyry (as in n. 8) blame Laodike for the murder of both Berenike and her son. According to Polyæn. 8.50 and Val. Max. 9.10 ext. 1, she only ordered the boy to be killed.
- 11 Just. 27.1.1. – Undecided between the guilt of Laodike and Seleukos remain Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 93; Ehling 2003, 307; Grainger 2010, 159; McAuley 2013. ‘Antiochos II’; Ogden 1999, 130 blames both of them. Otherwise, Laodike’s guilt is the common opinion; cf., e. g., Lehmann 1998, 87; Schmitt 2005, 966; Grainger 2014, 187.
- 12 While most ancient sources follow either of these explanations, Justin is the only one who reflects awareness of both traditions. But instead of explicitly arguing for the one or the other, he first applies the former motivation (revenge), then the second (rescue), before somehow blending them by stating that Berenike and her child were eventually dead when Euergetes arrived (27.1.2–7). This may be seen as symptomatic for the whole of Justin’s account: moral indignation is what matters (cf. § 5 *tam indignae fortunae*; § 7 *indigna res*), whereas he remains unconcerned with a precise chronology. Inconsistent is Grainger 2014, 186–8, who, on the one hand, believes that Philadelphos had actively been preparing the war and saw his opportunity come with the illness or death of Antiochos, but, on the other hand, lets the war begin in Kilikia (as an aggression of Berenike) and Syria (as a result of Berenike’s call for help).
- 13 Just. 27.1.6. For the chronology, cf. Hauben 1990, 29; Huß 2001, 240–2 (also on the enthusiastic welcome).
- 14 According to Polyæn. 8.50, Berenike’s maidens covered up her murder until the arrival of her father (!) Ptolemy (II). The fragmentary *P.Gourob* = *FGrH* 160 = Piejko, *APF* 36, 1990, 13–15 = Austin² 266 pretends she was visited by her brother, after his friendly welcome in Seleukeia and Antioch; cf. Hauben 1990; see below, sections VII–VIII.
- 15 See the same references as above, ns. 4 and 6.

In the course of this war, Euergetes also occupied Kilikia, Mesopotamia probably as far as Babylon, as well as the harbour cities Ephesos and Miletos on the Aegean coast, not to mention several minor positions in southern Asia Minor.¹⁶ It was a revolt in Egypt that compelled him to return home by the middle of 245 BC, though not without leaving behind governors in Mesopotamia and Kilikia, while he himself maintained direct control of Syria. By 241 BC, he had evacuated most positions, since Seleukos was then supported by his brother Antiochos Hierax.¹⁷ The peace agreement would have assured him 'only' of the possession of Seleukeia in Pieria, Ephesos, and Miletos.

Immediately thereafter, Hierax is said to have revolted against his brother. Justin points out that this happened when Hierax was raising an army, seemingly in support of Seleukos. But right after the peace with Ptolemy had been struck, he diverted his forces against his own kin. In the eyes of most scholars, this made for a clear start of the 'War of Brothers' in 241 BC.¹⁸ And it is commonly accepted that Laodike had stirred up her younger son against her older, although it is only Plutarch who accuses her of this explicitly.¹⁹

Since Laodike is otherwise no longer mentioned after 246 BC, the remainder of the 'War of Brothers' can be summarized very briefly: after Hierax had suffered initial setbacks against Seleukos in Lydia and Ionia, Mithradates II of Pontos inflicted a devastating defeat on the king near Ankyra. Seleukos barely escaped alive.²⁰ Hence Hierax became the lord of Asia Minor, gaining either the control or at least the support of the ruling houses of Galatia, Bithynia, and Pontus. According to the traditional narrative, the conflict with his brother as well as with Attalos I of Pergamon lasted throughout his life, which ended ingloriously through an ambush in Thrace in 227/6 BC.²¹ However, in a recent study, it has been shown that the 'War of Brothers' took place nearly simultaneously to the Third Syrian War (246–ca. 242 BC), whereas the conflict with Pergamon is not attested earlier than close to the end of Hierax' rule.²²

Despite its seemingly solid foundation in the sources, the traditional biography of Laodike is marred with inconsistencies and falls short of conventional logic, as

16 *P.Gourob* (as above, n. 14) on Kilikia and Seleukis; *Adoulis Inscription* = *OGIS* I 54 = Austin² 268 listing nearly all parts of the Seleukid Empire (but cf. Hauben 1990, 30–2 and Coşkun ca. 2016 on Babylon as the farthest point; differently Otto 1928, 51); and Blümel 1992 on Kildara in Karia (on which see below, sect. VIII).

17 Revolt in Egypt: Just. 27.1.9; two governors in 245 BC: Porphyr./Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43; peace in 241 BC: Porphyr./Eus. *FGrH* 260 F 32.8; Hierax: Just. 27.2.7–9.

18 Occasionally, the inconsistencies in Justin have induced scholars to suggest an earlier outbreak of the War of Brothers, though never with a conclusive argument on the time and reason: Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 105; Grainger 1997, 47; Toye, *BNJ* 260 ad F 32.8. Alternatively, Lozano 2005, 75 regards Hierax as a viceroy appointed by his brother in 245.

19 Plut. *mor.* 489a = *De fraterno amore* 18, quoted and discussed below, section X.

20 Porphyr./Eus. *FGrH* 260 F 32.8; Just. 27.2; Trog. *prol.* 27.2; also Plut. *mor.* 489ab and Phylarch. *FGrH* 81 F 30.

21 Just. 27.3 and Porphyr./Eus. *FGrH* 260 F 32.8. On earlier conflicts, cf. Polyb. 18.41.5–7; Poyaen. 4.17; Just. 27.2–3; *OGIS* I 269–80.

22 A companion piece on the rules of Seleukos II (246–226/25) and Antiochos Hierax (246–228/27) will be published in the proceedings of Seleucid Study Day III (Coşkun ca. 2016).

will be shown in the ensuing sections. All of our literary sources either follow Ptolemaic propaganda,²³ moralizing constructions, novelistic flourish, or offer a mixture thereof. Despite the fact that nearly the entirety of the evidence is distorted in one way or another, some fabrications can be identified and a more realistic chain of events reconstructed.

III. ANTIOCHOS II AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS SECOND MARRIAGE IN 253/52 BC

A systematic revision must begin with the end of the Second Syrian War and the marriage that sealed the resulting peace. If it were not for some ambiguous implications of this union, the hard facts would certainly speak for a clear-cut victory of Antiochos II.²⁴ Miletos and Ephesos, the main objects of dispute, had returned to Seleukid control in the first half of the 250s, as had several strongholds along the southern coast of Asia Minor.²⁵ In addition, due to the much higher costs for naval operations, the financial strain on Egypt exhausted the country and thus increased social tensions and fomented unrest (which would eventually lead to open rebellion in Upper Egypt in 245 BC).²⁶ Particularly noteworthy is that Antiochos' ally Antigonos Gonatas had defeated the Ptolemaic fleet decisively at Kos, and thus curbed its activities in the Aegean and Black Sea for the next few years. If K. Buraselis is correct in dating this naval engagement to 255 BC, it played a pivotal role in the Second Syrian War. If, however, the more traditional view should be maintained which connects the battle with the end of the Chremonidean War in 262 or 261 BC, one would single out the Rhodians as having prevented the Ptolemies from regaining control over the Aegean.²⁷ Either way, Antiochos profited immensely from his rival's failure off the shores of western Asia Minor.

23 This is accepted nearly throughout, though with the exception of Otto 1928, 58–60 (see below, n. 82).

24 But cf. Ogden 1999, 128: “he constrained Antiochus II by war to marry his daughter Berenice ‘Phernophoros’ and to divorce Laodice and reduce her to the status of concubine”. For the marriage as an indicator of the outcome of the war, cf. also Ager 2003, 42.

25 On Miletos, cf. App. Syr. 65.344; Trog. *prol.* 26.9–10; Polyæn. 5.25; cf. also *OGIS* 227 = Welles, *RC* 22 = *I.Didyma* II 493 = Austin² no. 175: Seleukos' response to his homage after succession (246 BC). On Ephesos, cf. Frontin. 3.9.10; Coşkun 2015; and see below on Antiochos II's operations before his death. Cf. also Will 1979, I 234–42; Heinen 1984, 419; Duyrat 2005, 225–9; Grainger 2010, 120–6; 129; 132; 141; and idem 123–4 on unsuccessful operations of Ptolemy II from Cyprus in Kilikia (including Tarsos, ca. 260–257 BC) and even Syria (around Arados, ca. 260–259 BC); idem 129 on Seleukid gains in Karia (Labraunda).

26 Cf. Grainger 2010, 127–8.

27 Buraselis 1982, 146–51; cf. also Otto 1928, 47; Walbank 1988, 290–5; 595–600; Gabbert 1997, 54; 160–72. However, Reger 1985/93 called for a return to the more traditional early date of the Battle of Kos to 261 BC; cf. already Heinen 1972, 196–7 and Will 1979, I 224–6 for 262 BC (end of the Chremonidean War); also Reger 1994, 40–1. Grainger 2010, 119 n. 9; 124–5 expresses a slight preference for the earlier date. The evidence does not allow for a firm decision, as Reger rightly points out. If his chronology is accepted, Gonatas may not have been involved in the Second Syrian War, and its hot phase with Antiochos II would have been over by 257 BC.

It is therefore difficult not to agree with the conclusion that L. Martinez-Sève draws in regards to the dynastic marriage:

“Or, au moment de la conclusion de la paix, Ptolémée II n’était pas en mesure d’imposer quoi que ce fût à Antiochos. C’est Antiochos II qui était en position de force, face à un Ptolémée affaibli par plusieurs pertes territoriales qui consacraient le recul des positions lagides en Asie Mineure et en mer Égée : l’Ionie fut perdue, ainsi que plusieurs bases navales en Cilicie, Trachée et en Pamphylie, tandis que l’influence lagide en Égée fût également mise à mal.”²⁸

That scholars have been hesitant to assess those achievements as more obviously glorious²⁹ from Antiochos’ point of view may also have to do something with the ingrained view of the Seleukid Empire as a ‘tumbling giant’, ever prone to dissolution after the murder of its founder in 281 BC.³⁰ But this paradigm is currently undergoing a substantial change. Revisiting the cases of Baktria, Parthia, Persis, but also of Kappadokia and Pontos, it has been demonstrated most recently that the traditional focus on disintegration is misconstrued. Rather the resilience with which the dynasty was able to re-establish its authority so successfully until the days of Antiochos III (and partly even beyond) ought to be emphasized: secessions could not be avoided completely, but in most cases they received a vigorous response. Nor does the growing number of kingdoms in the sphere of the Seleukid Empire reflect its dismemberment, but rather a process that D. Engels describes in terms of ‘feudalization’ under firm Seleukid control.³¹ Accordingly, the beginning of the royal Kappadokian era in 255 BC need no longer be regarded as a threat to Seleukid supremacy over major parts of Asia Minor, but the diadem, together with the hand of Antiochos II’s daughter Stratonike for prince Ariamnes, may well be perceived of as a reward for the loyalty Ariarathes III had displayed during the Second Syrian War.³²

Against this background, Ptolemy was in fact running the risk of losing all of his stakes. It is from this perspective alone that the betrothal of his daughter to his

(see above, n. 25). In this case, Ptolemaic activities in the Aegean will have remained on a low level before 250 BC, and attempts at a revival halted by the Rhodians around 255 BC (cf. Reger 1985/93, 163). – An immediate connection of the Battles of Kos and Andros (on which cf. Buraselis 1982; Coşkun 2015) in ca. 246 has been suggested by Tarn 1913, 461–6.

28 Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 696; also 693–7; 701–2 against the view of a divorce of Laodike; cf. Capdetrey 2007, 380 n. 296; cf. also Grainger 2010, 149–50; 2014, 182–4: the outcome of the war favoured Antiochos.

29 Cf. the summary of McAuley 2013 on ‘Antiochus II’: “While many have viewed this as the imposition of Ptolemaic dynastic will on the Seleucids through marriage, I concur with Grainger in seeing this as a more mixed end to the conflict (Grainger 2010, 135–9).” Particularly surprising is that Buraselis 1982, despite his important contribution to describing the Antigonid involvement into the Second and Third Syrian Wars, takes for granted that Antiochos promised the succession of Berenike’s offspring (172).

30 Cf. esp. Wolski 1999. For the notion of Seleukid “weakness”, cf. also Grainger 2010, 129–31. Further references in Shipley 2000, 289.

31 Engels 2011; 2013; cf. also the contributions by Engels ca. 2016; Strootman ca. 2016; Wenghofer ca. 2016 and Wenghofer and Houle in this volume.

32 On Kappadokia, cf. Diod. 31.19.6, with Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 701–2; Grainger 2010, 131; McAuley 2013 on ‘Stratonice of Cappadocia’ (marriage dated to ca. 250); D’Agostini 2013 (opposing the date of ca. 240 suggested by Macurdy 1932, 83).

rival became something close to a diplomatic victory, because it allowed him to end the war before the centre of his kingdom disintegrated.³³ Such successful negotiations notwithstanding, we should certainly expect Antiochos to have dictated the conditions. Ptolemy was not in any position to insist on the rejection of Laodike and her sons, which is nevertheless commonly believed. Porphyry, too, seems to have understood that the king of Egypt was acting out of weakness.³⁴

Be this as it may, the daughter was not the only price to be paid for peace. Substantial funds were added, though not under the title of ‘war indemnity’ but rather disguised as a spectacular dowry.³⁵ This demonstration of wealth and status would allow Ptolemy II to save face or even gain credit in the eyes of some contemporaries.³⁶ But after the protracted war had led to the exploitation of Egypt, such a display of extravagance was not particularly timely, and certainly not Ptolemy’s free choice. The dowry’s function as a disguised war indemnity might also be implied in Jerome’s report, particularly when read together with his preceding section on the political marriage: “He gave him an endless amount of thousands of gold and silver (coins) under the name of ‘dowry’ (*dotis nomine*), whence she was called the ‘Dowry-Bringer’ (Φερνοφόρος).” Admittedly, it cannot be known with ultimate certainty whether Porphyry or Jerome regarded this dowry as an elegant pretext for an indemnity or simply as a remarkable dowry; either could have been expressed with *dotis nomine* (thus also “as dowry”). The closeness of the Porphyrian tradition to Ptolemaic propaganda may well speak to the latter option.³⁷

33 Similarly, e.g., Otto 1928, 47; Hölbl 1994/2001, 42.

34 Porphyry/Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, l. 7: *volens itaque Ptolemaeus Philadelphus post multos annos molestum finire certamen, filiam suam nomine Berenicen Antiocho uxorem dedit*. “Desiring to end the burdensome war after many years, Ptolemy Philadelphos thus gave his daughter called Berenike as wife to Antiochos.”

35 Thus also Otto 1928, 45–6 (who considers *Phernophoros* a “Spotname”); Hölbl 1994/2001, 43; cf. Will 1979, I 241–2 with further references. *Contra* Grainger 2010, 138, though without argument. The fact that Ptolemy II was the one who gave his daughter should not be viewed as a sign of strength. While this may have been the case for the daughters of Antiochos III, it does not apply to his own wives Laodike III and Euboia, daughters of Mithradates II and Kleomenes of Chalkis respectively. If further examples were needed, Laodike I herself was only the daughter of the Elder Achaïos, a Macedonian (rather than an Anatolian) nobleman, even though he seems to have been married to a daughter of Seleukos I; Antiochos Hierax married a Bithynian princess. Cf. Grainger 1997 and McAuley 2013 for the evidence.

36 Cf. also Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 697 with slightly different nuances: “L’énorme quantité d’or et d’argent qui constituait la dot de Bérénice ne fut pas une façon d’acheter Antiochos pour le pousser à répudier Laodice. De manière générale, la dot restait la propriété des femmes et devait être restituée à l’épouse obligée de quitter le domicile familial. Cette dot devait permettre à Bérénice de tenir son rang à la cour séleucide.” While I generally agree with the prestige implication of a dowry, I do not think, however, that Greco-Macedonian private law can be pressed to such a degree to exclude that the dowry would benefit Antiochos. – One may also relate the spectacular display of wealth which Pliny the Elder attests for the same king (7.153): *eandem scientiam in Cleombroto Ceo Ptolemaeus rex Megalensibus sacris donavit centum talentis servato Antiocho rege*. Cf. also Grainger 2014, 181–2: Philadelphos “made a great fuss over the marriage”.

37 Porphyry/Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, ll. 11–2: *infinita auri et argenti millia dotis nomine dedit, unde Φερνοφόρος ... appellata est*. *nomen* in the sense of ‘legal title’ is very frequent, but it

At any rate, there are no indications that this gift may have included territories; in all likelihood, the *status quo*, which was already in Antiochos' favour, was simply preserved.³⁸ The marriage would at least serve the further purpose of inspiring both parties with some hope that peace would be maintained over the next years, and either king's lust for expansion diverted towards other directions.

If this revision is accepted, we would need strong evidence to accept that Laodike was ever disgraced by her husband. But no ancient source attests such a divorce, and only a single author (Jerome/Porphyry) mentions Laodike's demotion to the status of a concubine, though the same authority disingenuously admits a later reconciliation "out of love".³⁹ At the same time, this moralizing account completely ignores the political implications of the ages of the king's sons, a crucial aspect for the stability of a monarchy even before a successor was needed. The broad reception that this apolitical 'soap' version has been enjoying in modern scholarship is therefore quite surprising.⁴⁰ Aside for this version's isolation among the ancient traditions and its weak psychological motivation, there is a further flaw that has escaped many historians' attention: Jerome/Porphyry clearly assumed that

can occasionally take the meaning of 'pretext' (as in *Dig.* 1.18.6.6); cf., e.g., Heumann & Seckel s. v. – A parallel for a likewise ambivalent usage is to be found in Jos. *AJ* 15.154–5, where the return of "Koile Syria and Samaria and Judaea and Phoenicia" to King Ptolemy V Epiphanes by Antiochos III in 194/3 is explained as φερνῆς ὀνόματι; Hieron. in *Dan.* 11.17 (Porphy. *FGrH* 260 F 47) has the same expression, followed by an interesting comment on the sinister intentions: *data ei dotis nomine omni Coelesyria et Iudaea ... neque ... obtinere potuit Aegyptum* (sc. Antiochus), *quia Ptolemaeus Epiphanes et duces eius sentientes dolum cautius se egerunt et Kleopatra magis viri partes quam parentis fovit*. For variations, see Polyb. 28.20.9; App. *Syr.* 5.18; cf. Kaye and Ormitay 2015 on the historical context and the modern controversy.

38 The inclusion of Koile-Syria (Bouché-Leclercq I 1913, 89–90; Ogden 1999, 129) is neither attested nor likely (cf. Hölbl 1994/2001, 43; Martínez-Sève 2002/3, 697); the Eleutheros river remained the border between Seleukids and Ptolemies (Kosmin 2014a, 122). Jacoby ad Porphy. *FGrH* 260 F 32.6 (cf. also *FGrH* 81 F 24) includes Ephesos into the dowry, but this had earlier been recovered by Antiochos (cf. Coşkun 2015). Bevan 1902, 179 wonders if Ptolemy ceded (lost) parts of southern Asia Minor (esp. Pamphylia) as part of the dowry. Cf. Will 1979, I 241–2 for further discussion; also Kosmin 2014a, 33 and 278 n. 22 with further examples of territorial dowries (Dareios III / Alexander [Barsine]; Seleukos I / Chandragupta; Ptolemy III / Magas [Berenike II]); no less interesting is the fact that the same examples seem to put more importance on the material transfer, with the marriage having the subsidiary role of securing the deal.

39 Porphy./Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, ll. 12–14: *Antiochus autem Berenicen consortem regni habere se dicens et Laodicen in concubinae locum, post multum temporis amore superatus Laodicen cum liberis suis reducit in regiam*. This is followed by Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 91, though he adds that the death of Ptolemy II in 246 may have offered the opportunity for him to escape from Ptolemaic surveillance. – On "love" in dynastic marriages and its potential for moralistic distortions in Greek historiography, cf. Carney 1992; Almagor in this volume.

40 Cf., e.g., Huß 2001, 338–9: "Sie scheint ihrem Ex-Mann, der in Ephesos auf dem Totenbett lag, die Aussage abgerungen zu haben, die Regelung des Jahres 253/52 zu widerrufen", though without discarding that Laodike might have invented the designation of Seleukos. For further references, see above, n. 6.

reconciliation with Laodike automatically brought about the *rejection* of Berenike by Antiochos II.⁴¹

This consequence, however, is hardly compatible with the view that the legitimate successor to Antiochos II would still be Berenike's son, as upheld by a few ancient authors (such as Jerome/Porphyry) and many modern scholars.⁴² Apparently, heterogeneous strategies of de-legitimizing the succession of Seleukos II had been developed over time and found themselves condensed into a narrative that has finally been preserved through Jerome.

The latter (and possibly some intermediary authorities, including Porphyry) ignored that polygamy was a wide-spread phenomenon among Macedonian kings. No one has contributed so much to our understanding of this condition as D. Ogden, but, oddly, he, too, buys the 'soap' version of the concubinate, believing that Philadelphos intended "to sow discord at the Syrian court" resulting in "amphimetric strife" even if that meant putting his daughter's life at risk.⁴³ The farthest we might go is to concede that Antiochos could have promised Berenike the rank of *basilissa*, thus putting her at least on par with Laodike. However, while it is uncertain if Laodike ever bore the title at all, we ought to note that there is no compelling evidence that Berenike held the title of queen at any point in her marriage with Antiochos, or anywhere in the Seleukid Empire.⁴⁴

Next, the sale of the village Pannoukome near Kyzikos needs to be addressed, since it has often been viewed as Antiochos' compensation for his 'divorced' wife.⁴⁵ Accordingly, the fact that Laodike does not bear the title *basilissa* in the related

41 Berenike's rejection is implied in Laodike's fear *ne Berenicen reduceret* (sc. Antiochos): Porphyry/Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 32.8, l. 15. It is accepted by van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11 (Commentary) and Buraselis 1982, 172, whereby the latter explains that Berenike called in her brother out of protest and thus started the war. Cf. also Bevan 1902, 179: "In 246 Berenice was sitting solitary in Antioch."

42 S. above, n. 6, and below, n. 88, for references.

43 Ogden 1999, *passim*, and 127–9 on Laodike ("divorce ... status of concubine"); also Carney 1992 and Bielman Sánchez 2003 on Macedonian polygyny, even though the latter assumes that the status of first wives would suffer significantly after remarriage even without repudiation (48–9); Grainger 2014, 181–2 accepts the normality of polygyny at Macedonian courts, but denies any potentially destructive intention that Philadelphos might have had. For a better understanding of bigamy among the Seleukids, cf. Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 695 as well as Ramsey forthcoming and ca. 2016, who accept the bigamy of Antiochos II, as does Nourse 2002, 261–2.

44 Cf. Coşkun, in prep., discussing esp. the evidence for 'queen' Berenike from Samos (Kotsidou 2000, no. 178) and Egypt (*P. Cair. Zen.* II 59251 = Bagnall and Derow 1981 no. 24), both of which references seem to date prior to her marriage. However, Berenike mentioned in Kotsidou 2000, no. 179 l. 28 should not be identified with Syra, but rather with the second cousin and wife of Euergetes, Berenike II. See also Catull. *carm.* 66.22; Huß 2008, 56; partly differently, Ager and Hardiman (in this volume).

45 Dittenberger, *OGIS* I 225 II–IV = Welles, *RC* 19; 18; 20 = *IDidyma* 492A (Letter of Metrophanes); 492B (Letter of Antiochos II to Metrophanes, specifying the sale agreement and ensuing administrative steps); 492C (Letter of a *hyparches*) = Sartre 1995, no. 50 (pp. 86–7) = Virgilio 2003, no. 19 (pp. 268–72) = Aperghis 2004 no. 3 (pp. 315–8, cf. 102–3; 144–5; 290–2) = Austin² no. 173 = Miletta 2008 App. I. 6 = II. E. 2 (pp. 141–3; 155–6), all (but Dittenberger) with reference to the divorce of Laodike; cf. also Bevan 1902, 158; Ma 1999, 44 n. 59; Ehling 2003, 306; Schmitt 2005, 966.

evidence has been stressed as an argument for her demotion. But it is worthwhile pointing out that she is not addressed as “queen” in any other document; the fact that there is no positive evidence for either of the royal wives may thus not be coincidental.⁴⁶ At any rate, the acquisition of large estates was no unusual business for Seleukid royal women, as G. Ramsey has pointed out. No less important is the date of the transaction, around September or early October 254 BC.⁴⁷ This is incompatible with the idea that the (assumed) divorce was a reaction to the demands of Ptolemy II in the course of peace negotiations of 253 BC, only to be followed by a marriage with Berenike in April 252 BC or soon thereafter.⁴⁸ Otherwise, Antiochos would appear to have been desperate to divorce Laodike in 254, even before peace negotiations had started – which of course does not follow logically.

- 46 The Pannoukome dossier (see also below, n. 47), a reference from the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries (Sachs and Hunger 1989, II 54–5 [B4’], of 248/7 BC, see below with n. 49), evidence for land donations to Babylon, Borsippa and Kutha (‘Lehmann Inscription’ = Virgilio 2003, 153–6; cf. van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11, end of Commentary) as well as an epigraphic fragment from Miletos (Kotsidou 2000, no. 273) are discussed by Coşkun, in prep.
- 47 Ramsey forthcoming and ca. 2016. – The (now lost) sale contract must have dated to the beginning of *Dios*, i.e. ca. Oct., shortly followed by Antiochos’ letter to his satrap Metrophanes (Aperghis 2004, 291: *dioiketes*) on the 5th of *Dios* (RC 18 = *I.Didyma* 492B). The year must be 254 BC (similarly, Welles p. 92; Virgilio p. 268), thus either 58 SE = 255/54 (if *Dios* was the last month of the Graeco-Macedonian calendar of the 3rd century), or 59 SE = 254/53 (if it was the first). Year 59 is commonly supplemented in the lacuna of l. 36. At any rate, the contract grants the proceeds of year 59 SE to Laodike (ll. 9–10), for which work would start around Oct. 58/59 SE = 254 BC, and whose harvest would mainly be brought in around June and July 59 SE = 253 BC. The contract further details that the price would be transferred in three instalments in months 2 (or 3), 5 (or 6), and 8 (or 9) of year 60 SE (253/52 BC), i.e. following the gradual selling of the harvest of year 59 SE = (254)/253 BC. Inconsistently, Welles p. 95 seems to opt for 60 SE (253 BC) as the year of the transaction and of the letter (following Tarn 1913, 348 with n. 23), only to return to the more convincing year 254 BC (59 SE) on p. 95–6 under due consideration of the farming season. The reference to the month *Daisios* (ca. April) preceding Antiochos’ letter has repeatedly been attributed to the royal letter itself, which would then date to April (thus Mileta p. 142, though contradicting himself on p. 155 where he dates the sale to 254 BC) or May 253 BC (thus Otto 1928, 46, see below, n. 48), but it is better to attach it to the end of a preceding letter (*I.Didyma* 492A) transmitted in the same inscription, which Welles (RC 19, followed, e.g., by Virgilio p. 271) identified as the cover letter of Metrophanes to a subordinate. For Metrophanes had been ordered to deposit copies of the contract in the royal archive at Sardis as well as to display them at five major sanctuaries, including Ilion (i.e. the most prominent sanctuary within the district of Metrophanes, the satrap directly responsible for Pannoukome) and Didyma (from which the only surviving copy hails) (RC 18, ll. 27–33). But the interval of some six months may be better explained by regarding *Daisios* as the month of receipt of the copy in Didyma (April 59 SE = 253 BC). – Inconsistent Will 1979, I 242.
- 48 Based on *P. Cair. Zen.* II 59251 = Bagnall and Derow 1981 no. 24 (cf. also Bennett 2001–14, ‘Berenice Phernophorus’ n. 3), Otto 1928, 45–6 convincingly claims that wedding preparations had started in 253 BC, but he goes as far back as May for the peace negotiations because of a misconceived date for the sale contract (see above, n. 47). Differently, Lehmann 1998, 86 (likewise Grainger 2010, 133) explicitly posits the repudiation of Laodike and her sons in 254 with a view to the marriage in 252.

Finally, when we also note that the *Babylonian Astronomical Diaries* mention “Laodike the wife” in the course of 248/47 BC,⁴⁹ the idea of her repudiation ought to be buried completely.⁵⁰ Antiochos definitely made no commitment that deprived him of two potential successors who were beyond infancy, only to favour one who was not yet conceived. These conclusions will be confirmed further by a closer look at the how-about of the succession of Seleukos.

IV. ANTIOCHOS’ DEATH AND SELEUKOS’ SUCCESSION

Information on royal deaths has always been the object of manipulation as much by courts as by historiographers, especially those who follow the moralizing or sensationalist trends typical of Hellenistic historiography.⁵¹ The version preserved by Jerome/Porphyry is the most dramatic: Laodike first killed her husband, then ordered the assassination of Berenike and her son before fraudulently proclaiming Seleukos as the new king. Further details have been preserved in anecdotal sources (Valerius Maximus and Pliny): a certain Artemon was disguised as the fatally ill Antiochos in order to make this appointment of succession. If Jerome is taken literally, the succession only became effective after all three murders had been perpetrated.⁵² We need not worry about the practicability of this narrative, which would have created an interregnum of one to three months. The causality of this version seems to depend completely on the fictitious rejection of Laodike and the later reconciliation “out of love” (love alone was apparently regarded as too unreliable a link between husband and wife as to do without poison).⁵³

49 Sachs and Hunger 1989, II 54–5 (B4’). Grainger 2010, 153, however, takes this as a *terminus ad quem* for the reconciliation.

50 Cf. also Martínez-Sève 2002/3, 702 for a further argument based on the location of Ephesos: the king did not join his former wife in her exile (as implied by Lightman and Lightman 2000, 183; Ehling 2003, 306), but rather she joined him when he was preparing his military campaigns in the most important harbour city of Asia Minor.

51 Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, esp. 72; cf. Primo 2009, esp. 123. Also Grainger 2010, 156: “poisoning is so frequently cited as a cause of death by ancient historians that all it really means is that they did not really know what had caused Antiochos’ death.”

52 Porphyry/Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, ll. 14–20: *quae metuens ambigui viri animum, ne Berenicen reduceret, virum per ministros veneno interfecit; Berenicen autem cum filio, qui ex Antiocho natus erat, Icadioni et Genneo Antiochiae principibus occidendam tradidit; filiumque suum maiorem Seleucum Callinicum in patris loco regem constituit ... occisa Berenice et mortuo Ptolemaeo Philadelpho patre eius in Aegypto, frater illius et ipse Ptolemaeus cognomento Euergetes, tertius successit in regnum*. Cf. Val. Max. 9.14; Plin. *NH* 7.53: *Antiocho regi Syriae e plebe nomine Artemo in tantum similis fuit, ut Laodice coniunx regia necato iam Antiocho minum per eum commendationis regnique successionis peregerit*; App. *Syr.* 65.345. The ruse is accepted in all its details by Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 93.

53 While the very brief version of App. *Syr.* 65.345 does not mention a rejection, he qualifies the first marriage as based on love and the second on dynastic politics, which is compatible with Jerome’s account. – Grainger 2014, 180 tries to give credence to the ‘love’ relation by pointing out that the marriage with Laodike preceded Antiochos’ appointment as co-ruler, but Grainger’s chronology is not sound (see also Coşkun ca. 2016 n. 1 on the date of his accession).

Given how manifest the artificial nature of this ‘soap version’ is, it is all the more important to recall that none of the literary sources, despite their apparent pro-Ptolemaic tendencies, claims that Berenike’s son was ever proclaimed co-ruler by his father or effectively hailed king by whomsoever.⁵⁴ Phylarchos, Polyainos and Trogus (Justin/*Prologi*) even agree that Laodike did not play any role in the succession of Seleukos at all. Polyainos states explicitly that the oldest son was appointed by Antiochos II, if only due to the unsuitable age of his half-brother. The latter explanation clearly reflects a pro-Ptolemaic sentiment without denying the factual authority behind Seleukos’ succession. Justin’s account does not cast the least doubt on the regularity and smoothness of the transition from father to eldest son; Seleukos started to act criminally only once in power. Justin’s dramaturgy thus remains fully compatible with the details attested by Polyainos.⁵⁵

There is simply no need to mistrust the latter’s claim that Antiochos appointed Seleukos while still alive. However, we should consider going one step further: even without the testimony of Polyainos, it would be reasonable to expect that Antiochos embraced his forebears’ example of raising his eldest son, once of mature age, to co-rulership and having him operate in the Upper Satrapies.⁵⁶ The *Babylonian Astronomical Diaries* confirm that Antiochos maintained this tradition, albeit with minor modifications. Despite their fragmentary nature, the *Diaries* seem to attest Seleukos as co-ruling king in Babylon in month V of the year 246/5 BC (28 July/28 August), while his father was still believed to be alive in month VI (starting

54 For different views, see below, section VIII with a discussion of *I.Kildara*.

55 Polyae. 8.50; Just. 27.1.1. Generally on Phylarchos and his role within the historiography of the early Seleukids, cf. Primo 2009, 118–25; Toye, *BNJ* 260. – Without this argument, the appointment of Seleukos is also accepted by Plischke 2014, 223, who, however, denies that he had ever been co-ruling king.

56 Under the impression of the (distorted) literary sources, most scholars do not even regard this as a possibility, such as van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 10 (Commentary on rev. 6’) and *BCHP* 11 (Commentary), whereas Nourse 2002, 266 rejects the idea explicitly: “His death came too early for him to have designated an heir through co-kingship as had become the Seleukid practice, and while he evidently did name an heir just before he died – his eldest son, Seleukos – he also left behind a second wife, Berenike, and her infant son”. Cf. also Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 700, though with an inaccurate reference: “On note d’ailleurs que Séleucos n’avait pas été désigné corégent avant cette date. Les sources mésopotamiennes, qui sont les plus précieuses pour cette question, le montrent clairement.” Even more negative is Grainger 2014, 185, who claims that Laodike acclaimed Seleukos king. But see the following for the opposite view.

on 28 August).⁵⁷ Hence, from his residence in Ephesos, Antiochos appointed his oldest son probably in late May or June before dying in July 246 BC.⁵⁸

A closer look at the strategic situation of the Empire will allow us to give further credence to this reconstruction. The usurpation of Andragoras, the satrap of Parthia, seems to have occurred in 248/47 BC, and it obliged Antiochos to send a strong army eastwards.⁵⁹ At that time, the king happened to be tied up with the preparation of naval operations in the Aegean, and given the revival of Ptolemaic pressure on the same area, he judged that there was more at stake in the west than in the east – an assumption which would turn out to be correct.⁶⁰ Part of the successful strategy seems to have been to appoint Arsakes, the leader of the Parni, as *karanos*, a Persian equivalent to *strategos*,⁶¹ and to encourage him to invade Parthia from the north.⁶²

57 According to Sachs and Hunger 1989, II 68–72 to year 66 SE = 246/45 BC, Antiochos II was still supposed to be alive (in Babylon) at least until month VI (thus pp. 68–9, “B Lower edge”), which started on 28 August; there is barely space for the arrival of the news of his death before day 27 (23 September), and the entries for the subsequent months are lost. Seleukos II, in turn, was known as co-ruler (in Babylon) in month V (starting on 28 July) 246; his appointment must have been reported in a lost part of the inscription (after month IV, day 15 = 14 July and before month V, day 26 (24 August), unless one follows van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11, in their interpretation of A Rev. 5’–6’ referring to month V day 20 (see next n.; also n. 64 on Sittake). – According to van der Spek and Finkel (Commentary, without specification of the source), “[t]he first contemporary document dated to Seleukos II is from 22.III.67 SEB = 11 July 245 BCE”, though it has little value as a terminus for the retreat of the Ptolemaic forces from Babylon, since no local source confirms that Ptolemy was ever accepted as king. Inconsistent is the explanation of Lehmann 1998, 92 n. 19, who fails to see the implication for the start of Seleukos’ reign when claiming anachronisms due to later compositions of the entries.

58 van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11 (Commentary on *BM* 34428): “The news of Antiochus’ death reached Babylon on 20 Abu (month V) 66 SE = 19 August 246 (see *Astronomical Diary* concerning year SEB 66, AD II, p. 70/1, no. -245 A r.5’–6’).” This is followed, e.g., by del Monte 1997, 48; Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 76. However, neither the name nor death of any king is mentioned there; cf. the translation by Sachs and Hunger 1989, II 71: “[_____] happened in [E]sangil. That month, on the 20th, it was heard in Babylon [_____] / [_____] ____ and fear were in the land.” Surprisingly, van der Spek and Finkel continue as follows: “Seleucus II Callinicus was proclaimed king, and immediately accepted as such in Babylon.” But the entry quoted does not seem to be compatible with the arrival of news of a smooth succession, and contradicts the information on month VI (see preceding n.). I would rather expect that this entry was about a local event or portent.

59 With Just. 41.4.6 being our only literary source, the date of Andragoras’ revolt is very difficult to establish. Grainger 1997, 76–7 suggests ca. 246 BC, which is to say shortly before the death of Antiochos II. Engels 2013, 58–9 allows for a few years prior to 246.

60 Similarly, Grainger 2010, 140–1. See below, section IX, on Antiochos’ and Ptolemy’s operations.

61 Similarly, Engels 2013, 55–60. This possibility is also considered by Grainger 2010, 140–1 but then rejected due to the lack of evidence. Errington 2008, 122 also cautions against overstating the harm of the Parnian invasion in the first years after their invasion. The accounts of Strabo 11.9.2–3 (515) = Austin² 177; App. Syr. 65.364 and Just. 41.4 (cf. Trog. *prol.* 41) reflect the *secession* of Arsakes in the 230s, and thus offer only a *terminus ad quem* for the previous co-operation. For an in-depth discussion of the sources, but with inconsistent chronology, cf. Plischke 2014, 204–29.

62 The Parthian (Arsakid) era began 248/47 BC. On the chronology and the Parthian era, cf. also

One might wonder whether Antiochos put his oldest son, then aged around 19, at the head of this army that was then operating in the east. The available evidence does not allow us to specify whether Seleukos had effective command, was subordinate to another *strategos* or kept some distance from the endangered zone (perhaps even staying back in Babylon or Seleukeia on the Tigris). At any rate, we hear no more of Andragoras as of 246 BC, and have evidence for the prince's presence in Babylon in May and June 246.⁶³ We are thus safe in assuming that the usurper was defeated and Parthia had returned under Seleukid control. Having been notified of this success in Ephesos by May, Antiochos would have appointed his son as co-ruling king and probably ordered him to lead the victorious army back; it was then needed more along the Aegean coast. He might have suggested a festive enthronization ceremony in Babylon, possibly in combination with victory celebrations.⁶⁴ If so, Seleukos' departure from the Mesopotamian metropolis would have taken place in the latter half of July, a time span the existing fragments of the *Babylonian Chronicles* do not cover. The entry on the notification of Babylon about the death of Antiochos is likewise lost, which must have occurred only after 22 September.⁶⁵

Seleukos had already arrived in Lydia at around that time.⁶⁶ He was in all likelihood leading back a major section of the victorious troops, with the intention to

Brodersen 1989, 203–6; Luther 1999; further Plischke 2014, 204–39, esp. 218–20 and 228–9 (with a different interpretation).

63 Seleukos was singled out in month III (after day 12) = (after 11) June 246 when he may have borne a distinguished, but not yet the royal title (there is a *lacuna* just before his name). Prior to this, on the 11th day of month II (12/13 May), he celebrated the Akitu Festival together with his brother Antiochos and sister Apammu (Apama). The female sex of the latter has now been firmly established by van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11, Text A 13. This excludes the interpretation of *Apammu* as male *Apames*, and thus as the name of Berenike's son, as suggested by del Monte 1997, 46–7 (even though pointing out that the form was neither Greek nor Akkadian); Ogden 1999, 127–8 regards *Apames* as son of a third wife; cf. also (though with a different conclusion) Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 699–700; Plischke 2014, 224 (with further references). For female *Apama*, cf. also Grainger 1997, 38 (but confused p. 71 'Anon. (1)': anonymous daughter of Berenike; and p. 13: anonymous son and daughter *Apama*); Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 75; McAuley 2013 'Antiochus II'.

64 There is admittedly no positive evidence for this to have happened in Babylon, but see above, n. 57, on the *lacuna* of the chronicles. Alternatively, one might consider that notice of his appointment reached Seleukos while already marching back westwards. – On the basis of a highly fragmentary inscription, van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 10 (rev. 6') wonder if Seleukos might have had to flee from Babylon to Sittake upon the arrival of news of Antiochos' death, and it was there that he would have assumed the diadem; however, the transmitted line only states that someone ascended the throne, either [in Si]ttake or perhaps a person coming from there? At any rate, it is not even clear, if the stone at all relates to Seleukos II; likewise possible would be a reference to the accession of Antiochos II in 268/67, following the illness or the death of Seleukos, son of Antiochos I in 268/66 (rev. 7', with cf. Coşkun ca. 2016, n. 1). If it does relate to Seleukos II though, we would then have to date the event to June or early July; however, there would be no need to assume a flight from Babylon. For the location of Sittake on the Tigris, along the way from Babylon to Susa, cf. Kessler 2002.

65 See above, n. 57.

66 It is feasible that he had taken measures to slow down the spread of the information in the east.

deploy them in Thrace, if not directly against Ptolemy Euergetes. But the reports of his father's death would soon have been followed by rumours of further turmoil: the betrayal of the admiral Sophron and the ensuing outbreak of a war in Ionia.⁶⁷ So he sped up his march, but when he finally arrived in Lydia, he realised that his own kin was revolting against him: his uncle Alexander had closed the gates of Sardis to him, and his fourteen-year old brother Antiochos Hierax was heading active military resistance.⁶⁸

Whether or not all of this reconstruction is trusted, I see no reasonable way around accepting that Seleukos was appointed co-ruling king by his own father, and that, throughout the empire, the recognition of this promotion became effective about one to three months before news of Antiochos' death arrived. This chronology, however, begs the question of why Laodike would have committed any of the murders ascribed to her.

V. LAODIKE'S ALLEGED MURDER OF HER HUSBAND ANTIOCHOS

Let us start with the death of Antiochos. Since there had been no repudiation, reconciliation, or risk to the succession of Seleukos, we should simply follow Justin and Polyainos in ignoring the allegation that Laodike repaid reconciliation with the murder of her benefactor.⁶⁹ This said, the available sources permit us to identify the roots of this smear campaign. The two aforementioned authors provide strong evidence for the fact that Phylarchos' narrative of the succession did not blame Laodike with murder – despite the common opinion that sees Phylarchos at the beginning of

– Contrary to Sartre 1995, 92 or Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 701, he was not with Laodike in Ephesos, when his father died, even though Just. 27.1.1 and Porphyry./Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43, ll. 12–14 might suggest this.

67 More on Sophron below in sections V and IX; on the Laodikean War and his mother's death in section X.

68 It is uncertain when Hierax arrived in the west. While one cannot definitely exclude that he had been accompanying his brother, it is more likely that he had departed earlier than Seleukos, i. e. soon after the Akitu festival in May (see above, n. 63). There is no further mention of him before his open conflict with his brother.

69 Without a comparison of the sources, the allegation is also rejected by Macurdy 1932, 84 (though not on p. 88) and Nourse 2002, 267 as Ptolemaic propaganda and by Grainger 2010, 156 as the result of the rivalry between the two widows, while McAuley 2013 'Antiochus II' stresses the sheer implausibility. Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 74–6 rejects it on the ground that Laodike was not prepared for the ensuing events and would not have done so while Seleukos was far away; with Droysen she points to Ptolemaic sources for the allegations. Cf. also Martinez-Sève 2002/3, who rejects all the fabricated conditions that led up to the allegation of the murder, without discussing the circumstances of the death itself, and Evans 2012, 170 with n. 51, who dismisses the poisoning of Antiochos II on the ground that he was (allegedly) over 60 and died of old age. Jakobsson 2013, in turn, rightly rejects this argument since Antiochos died aged around 40 (Porphyry. *FGrH* 260 F 32.6), but unfortunately takes this as a confirmation of his unnatural death (as did, e. g., Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 93). Undecided Plischke 2014, 224 n. 362.

this tradition.⁷⁰ However, this does not necessarily mean that he was unaware of it. It is rather in a different context, the condemnation of a certain Danae, that Phylarchos addresses the subject.

Danae was a female retainer of Laodike and the lover of the *strategos* Sophron. When the latter fell out of the ruler's favour for an unspecified crime, Danae warned him of the imminent threat and thus enabled him to escape from Sardis to Ephesos. As the commander of the fleet that was harboured there, he brought the whole city under his command and invited Ptolemaic forces into it. Outraged by the betrayal, Laodike condemned Danae for treason. And it was in the face of her imminent execution that she reproached Laodike for murdering her husband Antiochos.⁷¹

While the fate of Danae is highly suited to dramatize the events, it is less apt to convey much authority to her claim. As indicated before, not even Phylarchos himself seems to have believed the slander, but he did not bother to suppress or contradict it either. Since it is known that the historiographer was as hostile to the Seleukid house as he was favourably disposed towards the Ptolemies, it should not go unnoticed that neither the narrator Phylarchos nor even the character Danae claims the innocence of Sophron. His guilt was such that Seleukos II would not have condoned it either, so that he did not await the king's return from the east but sought protection through Ptolemy Andromachos, the half-brother and admiral of Euergetes.⁷² Considering this outcome, it is not too bold a speculation to surmise that the reason for the conflict might have been secret diplomacy with the house of Egypt, which was actively seeking to re-establish its hegemony over the Aegean around those years.

Be this as it may, the whole accusation that Laodike murdered her husband turns out not only to be lacking a plausible motivation, but also credible evidence. In fact, the slander does not even seem to have formed part of the official Ptolemaic propaganda in 246 when the basis for the succession narrative of Phylarchos was laid. This would rather have stressed the dignity of Berenike and her son, whose murder called for revenge.

VI. THE MURDER OF BERENIKE AND HER SON

The next question that must be posed is why Laodike would have arranged for the murder of Berenike and her son, if Antiochos had never designated the latter his successor, but rather had effectively established Seleukos as co-ruling king. What danger may have lurked behind a baby or toddler at the court of Antioch, when early Hellenistic kingship required adulthood for a successor?⁷³ Admittedly, tensions with the Ptolemies had been escalating in previous years over the renewed

70 In contrast, Brodersen 1989, 200–1 points out that the differences among our sources reflect different emphases, not alternative traditions about Laodike. Cf. also Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 701; Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 73–4; 80; Primo 2009, 123–4.

71 Phylarch. *FGrH* 81 F 24. On the historical context, cf. Coşkun ca. 2016.

72 More on Sophron and the loss of Ephesos below, section IX.

73 Cf. the example of Antigonos Doson and his nephew Philip V, or – much later – that of Attalus

rivalry in the Aegean and Thrace; but would it have been wise to provoke Euergetes further by murdering his sister and nephew? And would it have been timely to do so while Seleukos was still in the east with a large part of the army? Ordering such an assassination immediately from the deathbed of her husband can only appear plausible if the apolitical framework provided by the moralizing historians is accepted. In such a context, Laodike might well have let herself be carried away by jealousy. But since we now know much better that Antiochos' second marriage had never implied her rejection, we need not think of her as a hatred-driven fury.⁷⁴

A completely different scenario emerged only a few weeks later when Ptolemy's army took possession of Ephesos and in the process opened the war.⁷⁵ But a closer look at Polyainos' anecdote will speak against either widow having been a driving factor in the outbreak of hostilities. In this account, Berenike appears to have been aware of her perils ahead of time, without any specific source of her knowledge being mentioned. Interestingly, she felt she could not rely on anyone at the court of Antioch, so she turned to the magistrates of the city. But they are said to have murdered her son on the spot, before giving her a guard of Galatians. Mistrusting the latter, she let herself be trapped by her doctor Aristarchos and was then killed. It is difficult to see that any of those acting against her had been instigated from the court of Sardis.⁷⁶

This fancy story ends with the ruse of Berenike's female retainers, Panariste, Mania, and Gethosyne, who hid her corpse and pretended publicly that she was still alive (with one of them acting as the wounded widow), while secretly waiting for Ptolemy to take revenge.⁷⁷ The source on which Polyainos was drawing for this anecdote must have been a historian with a pro-Ptolemaic and anti-Seleukid mindset, as well as a disposition towards dramatizing the plot: Phylarchos is again a likely suspect. In any eventuality, whoever designed or invented this plot was aware of and sympathetic with the propaganda of Euergetes, since he pretended to have visited his sister in Antioch while she was still alive.⁷⁸ Apparently, the king of Egypt was hoping to encounter less resistance if he came as the protector of Berenike rather than as her avenger.

II and his nephew Attalus III. Even more telling is that 14-year-old Antiochos Hierax did not assume the royal title until five years after his usurpation, see Coşkun ca. 2016.

74 In contrast, Nourse 2002, 266–9 argues that Laodike did not have a choice but to get rid of Berenike and her son, which is proven by the aggression of Ptolemy immediately thereafter. According to Grainger 2014, 186–8, both women started to act violently as soon as they learnt about Antiochos' death.

75 At this stage, however, the entire fleet in the Aegean was lost. If decided to take action in Antioch, Laodike would have had to send out a trusted man on horseback, hoping that he might overtake Euergetes' fleet. For this was already operating along the southern coast of Anatolia and might have been aiming further east.

76 Polyain. 8.50. Likewise, Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 93 considers the possibility that the officials in Antioch acted spontaneously, while, on p. 95, he follows Justin in identifying Seleukos as the main culprit.

77 According to Polyainos, this was the father Ptolemy II Philadelphos. But he had died in January 246, so that this is an apparent confusion with the brother Ptolemy III Euergetes.

78 Thus *P.Gourob* (as above, n. 14), col. IV.

So far the anecdote conveys the impression that the decision to eliminate Berenike and her son was made locally and somewhat spontaneously under the impression of an imminent threat. Action was taken in all likelihood out of loyalty to the legitimate king Seleukos II, most probably when Euergetes was about to land in Seleukeia. The plot itself does not require Laodike's agitation, even though it neither excluded that she could, at a later stage, be blamed for the crimes in order to exonerate the real culprits. At the time not even Seleukos would have been in a position to learn about the events in Ionia and Syria quickly enough to order the execution, since he was just arriving in Lydia (more on this below).

Under these circumstances, it would have been reasonable for Berenike to take action, either to secure herself and her son against attacks from Seleukid loyalists, or even to organize active support within Antioch to welcome her brother and avoid bloodshed at his expected arrival. While in fact acquiescent voices would prevail among the officials of Seleukeia and Antioch once Euergetes did show up,⁷⁹ the men surrounding Berenike had decided differently only a few days ago, doing away with the threat to the House of Seleukos.

VII. THE DESIGN OF THE STRATAGEM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-SELEUKID PROPAGANDA

When exactly was the stratagem to cover up at least Berenike's death concocted?⁸⁰ If it was set in motion as described by Polyainos, this must have happened before the arrival of Euergetes. The ruse would have stood a chance only if the king was already approaching the city. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how either Berenike's corpse or any retainer acting as the injured widow could have been concealed or held safe, respectively, for weeks, and all this in such a hostile environment as claimed by Polyainos. However, the triumphal arrival of Euergetes in Seleukeia and then Antioch does not fit the image of an emergency mission. Since the meeting among the siblings does not even appear as part of the official program in the *Gourob* Papyrus, one gains the impression that the survival of Berenike was invented only after Euergetes' arrival in Antioch, more precisely, when news of the survival of Seleukos were arriving and Euergetes instantly decided to persecute his rival as long as he was weak. So before leaving the city, his court would have

79 The allegation of *P.Gourob* (as above, n. 14), cols. II–III, that Euergetes was in fact not resisted but welcomed in Seleukeia and Antioch (cf. Polyæn. 8.50; also Piejko 1990, 16; 22–3; 25–6), despite its propagandistic nature, need not be fictitious, though less so due to the authority of Berenike and her son (thus esp. Otto 1928, 55–8), but rather after (erroneous) news of the death of Seleukos had arrived, resistance must have appeared pointless (thus Coşkun ca. 2016).

80 While conceding the uncertainty surrounding the murder itself, the story of its concealment until the arrival of Euergetes is most commonly accepted, cf., e.g., Ogden 1999, 130–1; similar Grainger 2010, 159–61, even though he styles Ptolemy's travel as a "visit to his sister and his nephew; the greeting he received was thus a sign of local loyalty to the infant king and a gesture of respect for a visiting king" (an interpretation, that exceeds the acceptable degree of naivety on both sides in my opinion). Savalli-Lestradé 2003, 72 contextualizes the event within the importance for the court to control any information on royal deaths.

wanted to maintain the ruse of Berenike's survival, in order to facilitate his move further eastwards, where reliable news was less easily available.⁸¹

The ruse itself cannot, of course, have been part of Ptolemaic propaganda, but given how sympathetic it is with Berenike and her family, it can neither be a pro-Seleukid version.⁸² It rather appears to be an unofficial attempt at reconciling known facts with contradicting official versions: while it had seemed to be clear to the people of Antioch that Berenike and her boy had been murdered together, the new version required the mother to live on – or at least to appear to do so.⁸³ Other details would have been added to the narrative either among the rumours of contemporaries or by the sensationalist historiographer Phylarchos. This being said, the embellished narrative should not be regarded as completely fictitious. Some knowledge of local affairs seems to be reflected not only in the names of the three female retainers, but also of the physician Aristarchos, who betrayed Berenike. Most important are the “Galatian mercenaries”: even though they remain anonymous in Polyainos' account, parallel versions address them as Icadion and Genneus, two Celtic names not known from other Hellenistic courts or central Galatia, hence they would not easily have been invented by Phylarchos.⁸⁴

Similar rumours may likewise have circulated about Berenike's son. Polyainos reports that after his murder he was secretly replaced, too, though this time by the assassins themselves. Since there is no mention of him in the Gourob Papyrus, it is safe to assume that this element of the story represents a stage which dates to after Euergetes' departure from Antioch, possibly even after his return to Egypt. The whole material was sufficiently thrilling to inspire fantasy, and Phylarchos might have offered more details, possibly even more variants than have come down to us. In contrast, not the ruse, but its result became the version propagated by the Ptolemaic court, since this maintained the fiction that Berenike was still alive at least when her brother went on to intrude ever deeper into the Seleukid Empire.

81 *P.Gourob* (as above, n. 14), col. II–IV. For the lack of haste on Euergetes' part, cf. also Piejko 1990, 26–7, though his attempt to discuss away the implication (“Perhaps ‘going to the sister’s’ means no more than her residence”) is unconvincing, the genitive case is not justified.

82 Differently, Otto 1928, 58–70, prefers to believe that this report is factual and Berenike was killed only in 245 BC; the ruse is regarded as a pro-Seleukid apology for the inglorious loss of Syria; the rest of the argument is even fancier than Polyaeus' version: the boy was killed, Berenike survived, and her party produced another boy to maintain the fiction that Berenike and Ptolemy would act on his authority, though when the truth could no longer be hidden, the blame for this ruse was put on the party of Laodike; similarly, still Ehling 2003, 307; 311; Schmitt 2005, 966. – For a rejection of further implausible explanations, cf. Bennett 2001–14 ‘Lysimachus (Son of Ptolemy II)’, n. 3.

83 Piejko 1990, 24 concedes that Berenike was dead, but downplays Euergetes' intention to deceive anyone. Piejko rather refers to the tradition of continued nominal rule of a monarch before succession was settled. However, visiting the sister does not really fit this explanation.

84 Porphyr./Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43 ll. 15–17: *Berenicen autem cum filio ... Icadioni et Genneo Antiochiae principibus occidendam tradidit (sc. Laodice)*, with Val. Max. 9.10 ext. 1; Bevan 1902, 181–2; Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 704; Coşkun 2013, 84 n. 15 on the names; less convincingly, Sekunda 2010, 349–50 considers *Kaineus* authentic and speculates about a descent from Thessalian Atrax. However, Ikadion may well have been identical with the homonymous Seleukid official attested on Ikaros, an island in Persian Gulf: Plischke 2014, 98–9.

At any rate, the first allegations that Laodike was the culprit may well date to the days Euergetes spent at Antioch. Accusing her would have been advantageous in various regards: first, responsibility for starting the aggression could be blamed upon his opponents, and, at the same time, this would allow most dignitaries of Antioch to save face (and ensure their own safety) by singling out only a few individuals allegedly corrupted by Laodike. The inhabitants of Antioch would have had no difficulty in buying this story. Not only had Laodike had fewer opportunities to act as benefactress of the city than Berenike Phernophoros, but also the jealousy between two wives was easy to fathom. This might have assuaged even those who had felt alleged to Seleukos II, especially so shortly after expressing their loyalty on occasion of his victory in Parthia, his appointment as co-ruler or his succession as sole king of the empire. Laodike, then, was the ideal scapegoat in autumn of 246 BC.

But soon the situation must have changed. As we shall see below, Laodike died in 246 BC, and her younger son Hierax even allied with Euergetes not much later. The official propaganda would thus have shifted its focus to Seleukos as the main culprit. Accusations were not only confined to the assassinations at Antioch, but would then have extended to speculations about the death of Antiochos II, since these were directly designed to question the legitimacy of Seleukos. Given that neither Justin nor Polyainos blame Laodike for the latter crime, our previous conclusion seems to be confirmed: Phylarchos introduced the allegation of poisoning in the separate narrative of Danae's execution. Since allegations regarding the appointment of Seleukos would easily have been recognizable as counter-factual in 246 BC, it is reasonable to situate the creation of this tale a bit later.

Such modifications notwithstanding, the broad literary tradition blames Laodike with the dynastic murders in Syria, and there is no alternative to accepting that Phylarchos' account followed the initial propaganda which had been fuelled by rumour and imagination probably as much in Antioch as in Alexandria.⁸⁵ However, he may at least have mentioned the alternative version which rather accuses Seleukos. Among our surviving sources, Justin is the only author who presents Seleukos as the main culprit, even though without denying guilt on the part of Laodike either.⁸⁶

85 On rumours in such contexts, cf. Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 173: "Il faut noter aussi que la fréquence des crimes dynastiques – concernant non seulement le roi, mais l'ensemble des membres de la dynastie – a pu conduire les contemporains à jeter la suspicion sur tout décès princier ou royal soudain, et que les historiens anciens, même parmi les plus respectables, ont parfois enregistré ces rumeurs sans critique. Le mécanisme est le même pour les historiens modernes, qui partagent cette tendance au soupçon."

86 Just. 27.1.1. It is not difficult to understand Justin's choice: the composition of his book 27 depends on offences against brotherly love, as exemplified first with the half-brothers Seleukos and Berenike's son and next with the pair Seleukos and Hierax.

VIII. THE INSCRIPTION FROM KILDARA: PROOF FOR THE KINGSHIP OF BERENIKE'S SON?

One further detail of Polyainos' *stratagem* deserves to be pointed out: nothing hints at Berenike's role as an effectively ruling queen, let alone at the royal title of her son. In fact, the combined narratives of Polyainos, Justin, and Porphyry/Jerome exclude that Phylarchos ever addressed him as king. The collective literary evidence is in agreement with the silence of the *Astronomical Diaries* about a royal title of Seleukos' half-brother. Euergetes does not seem to have bothered to set the record 'straight' once he had taken possession of major parts of Babylon starting in December 246 BC.⁸⁷

This is of some importance for the propaganda designed in Antioch after Berenike's death: it did not operate with a claim based on the royal status of her son, since this would clearly have been arrogated and would thus even have justified the execution of both mother and son. The lack of evidence for his effective royal position should be taken seriously, especially since no other pro-Ptolemaic *literary* account makes any such assumption – in contrast to many modern scholars.⁸⁸ Admittedly, the latter take recourse to an inscription from Kildara in Karia, first published some twenty years ago.

This inscription attests an embassy by the Kildareans to a certain Tlepolemos, the Ptolemaic commander-in-chief in Karia (and perhaps also Lykia), who accepted their change "to the *pragmata* of King Ptolemy and his sister Queen Berenike and King Antiochos, the offspring of King Antiochos and Queen Berenike" (ll. 5–8).⁸⁹ This document has been regarded as the ultimate proof for the effective succession of Berenike's son.⁹⁰ If the traditional narrative were maintained, Ptolemy's acts of

87 Cf. Hauben 1990, 29 as well as van der Spek and Finkel, *BCHP* 11, on the arrival of Ptolemaic forces outside the city of Babylon in month XI (starting on 25 November) 246.

88 Thus, e.g., Bevan 1902, 181; Will 1979, I 249; Blümel 1992; Sartre 1995, 27; Huß 2001, 338–40; Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 75; Ehling 2003, 304–5; Schmitt 2005, 966; Duyrat 2005, 230; Grainger 2010, 150; 155–6; McAuley 2013 'Antiochus II'; Kosmin 2014a, 19 and 310 n. 74 (also drawing on the Belevi Mausoleum as the assumed tomb of Antiochos II: the rivalry between the courts did not allow for his burial in Seleukeia or Antioch); also Shipley 2000, 289. According to Otto 1928, 52–3, Berenike even ordered the invasion of Kilikia; cf. also Piejko 1990, 16–7; Ehling 2003, 308; Grainger 2010, 156 (not yet idem 1997, 39). In a different context, Lehmann 1998, 89 concludes from a very fragmentary line in *P.Gourob* I 23 (σκάφη τῆς ἀδελφῆς πρὸς αὐτούς) that "Berenike hier durchaus als politisch-militärisch handlungsfähige Instanz erwähnt [wird]". – I do not resume the discussion of the coinage of Antiochos Soter, which Houghton and Lorber I.1, 2002, 225–227 (Plischke 2014, 224 n. 365, with further references) attribute to Berenike and her son in 246 BC; for a refutation on numismatic grounds, cf. Erickson ca. 2016.

89 *I.Kildara* = Blümel, *EA* 20, 1992, 127–33 = *SEG* 42, 1992, no. 994 = Gauthier, *BE* 1994, 571–3 no. 528 = Austin² 267. For the same triad, cf. also D ll. 10–13. On Tlepolemos from Xanthos and the situation in Karia, cf. Blümel 1992, 132; Grainger 2010, 157. Differently Gauthier, according to whom Kildara had never ceased to be Ptolemaic. This view is convincingly rejected by Lehmann 1998, 96–8, though I hesitate to follow his suggestion that Tlepolemos was in fact representing Euergetes in Alexandria.

90 Whether he was indeed called 'Antiochos' or if that was a (fictitious) throne name cannot be

hostility must have occurred only *after* the attack on Berenike and her son. More precisely, Polyainos and Justin seem to presuppose that the two were killed before Ptolemy was even notified of the dangers they were in, before he decided to invade Syria, and thus to break the peace of 253. Only this would have permitted Tlepolemos to accept the offer of the Kildareans according to the traditional narrative. Likewise, not even the propaganda version of the Gourob Papyrus claims that Ptolemy's nephew was still alive when his uncle landed in Syria, let alone that he ever bore the royal title. The papyrus is thus in full agreement with the entire literary tradition on this point.

These, however, are not the only inconsistencies that previous discussions of the inscription have left unresolved. Most importantly, the Kildareans appear not to be making a choice among two rivalling Seleukid kings (Seleukos and his little half-brother 'Antiochos') with more or less equal claim to their father's inheritance, but rather they betrayed their former dynasty altogether by opting for the *pragmata* of Ptolemy. By blurring the latter's affairs with those of Berenike and 'Antiochos', Tlepolemos tries to mitigate the perception of this outright treason, but not even he bothers to pretend that Ptolemy might be acting as the tutor of his nephew. The inclusion of Kildara into the Ptolemaic Kingdom seems to have been expressed even more clearly further down, if indeed the instructions for the ruler cult referred to Ptolemy Euergetes and his wife rather than his sister.⁹¹

Besides yet another act of aggression against Seleukid rule, the letter thus attests an alternative version of pro-Ptolemaic wishful thinking; in fact, it is the earliest transmitted version of an anti-Seleukid distortion of the realities that was concocted after the death of Antiochos II. This time, however, it remains unclear if it was authorized by the court or should rather be regarded as a spontaneous attempt at legitimizing treason. Tlepolemos may not have known much more than that the Ptolemaic fleet was active all around the western and southern coast of Asia Minor, while Seleukid forces were either too weak or too far away to respond effectively. No specific knowledge regarding the conditions in Antioch can be inferred from this letter, other than the fact that news of the murder of Berenike and her son had not yet reached Karia. As a result, this document does not confirm the traditional pro-Ptolemaic narrative, but rather demonstrates how quickly the factual conditions and the official versions of the conflict were changing in the course of 246 BC.

The treachery of both Sophron and the Kildareans seems to imply that, since Antiochos II had passed away, Euergetes and his officials were ready to challenge the Seleukids wherever an opportunity arose. The same aggressive attitude was

decided, even though the *Babylonian Chronicles* should not be drawn on to base such a suspicion, see above, n. 63. – Grainger 1997, 13 et al. still lists him as Anon(ymus) 1.

91 Thus Lehmann 1998, 99–100, who further points out that there is no mention of a tutorship, let alone a termination of that role. But he goes on as follows: "Es geht um die einheitliche und zentrale, politisch integrierende Instanz einer königlichen *Samtherrschaft* von drei in einer genau überlegten Reihenfolge aufgeführten Herrscher-Personen." (99). More convincingly, he states that "die Regelung des künftigen Herrscherkultes für das gottkönigliche Paar Ptolemaios III. und Berenike II. den Blick auf den Zielpunkt einer völligen Einschmelzung des neugeonnenen, riesigen Machtbereiches freigibt" (100).

displayed in Kilikia. Amongst other details, the first transmitted part of the aforementioned *Gourob Papyrus* attests that the Ptolemaic intrusion caught the Seleukid officials completely by surprise.⁹² The fact that they intended to send the treasure to Laodike in Ephesos reveals a date still close to the death of Antiochos: apparently, they were unaware that Laodike had moved the court back to Sardis, the prime royal residence in Asia Minor, before losing control of Ephesos altogether within a matter of days.⁹³ These circumstances imply that the invaders hardly acted in revenge for murders which might – or might not yet – have happened in Antioch.

The emerging chronological pattern is consistent: the perils of Berenike and her son had not caused Ptolemaic aggressions in Ephesos, Kildara, Kilikia and Syria, but, on the contrary, it was these attacks that triggered the murder of Euergetes' sister and nephew. As pointed out above, the account of Polyainos conveys the impression that court officials and civic magistrates at Antioch decided to take action in the face of a forceful Ptolemaic invasion, not as a result of instructions from the Berenike or Euergetes. While treated with due respect in times of peace, Berenike and her son became a serious risk in case they might fall into the hands of her aggressive brother. The account of Polyainos might reflect that Berenike and (contrary to Polyainos) also her son were put under special surveillance, if not under house arrest, once news of the Ptolemaic intrusions into Asia Minor reached Antioch. But when Euergetes suddenly turned to Syria, not even their deportation appeared to be a safe option and Seleukid loyalists decided to kill them. The potential danger of not doing so is clearly exemplified in the inscription of Kildara.

IX. THE PTOLEMAIC PERSPECTIVE: FROM RECOVERY TO AGGRESSION (253–246 BC)

It is now time to look at the strategic situation of the Ptolemies more comprehensively, because it has become apparent so far that the turbulent events ensuing the death of Antiochos II can only be understood against the background of highly aggressive Ptolemaic imperialism. After the losses during the Second Syrian War, the situation had gradually changed to the advantage of Ptolemy II Philadelphos. A major threat to Alexandria was nullified when Philadelphos was reconciled with his half-brother Magas of Kyrene towards the end of the 250s BC. Admittedly, the unexpected coup of the latter's widow Apama, daughter of Antiochos I, seemed to reverse this peace process when she called in Demetrios the 'Handsome' from

92 *P.Gourob* (as above, n. 14), col. IIa. Note that the reports on Kilikia (IIa) and Syria (IIb–IV) are heterogeneous in nature (3rd person versus 1st person) and seem to draw on different sources.

93 Sardis had also been the western-most residence to Antiochos I around 276–274 BC (Sachs and Hunger 1988, I 344–5 = del Monte 1997, 27–8 = Austin² no. 163) and to his widow until her death in 254 BC (Sachs and Hunger 1989, II 32–3), while Ephesos had been most important, as long as the king was supervising naval campaigns (cf. Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 702). Sardes also hosted the royal archive of western Asia Minor in 254 BC, see above, n. 47, on Welles, *RC* 18 l. 27–8. Differently, Grainger 2010, 158–9 explains that “Laodike and her sons had presumably moved east to be closer to the main action in Syria.”

Macedon: he became the new king and husband of her daughter Berenike, despite her betrothal with Ptolemy III Euergetes. However, Berenike soon rid herself of her overbearing mother and husband, and then proceeded to honour her father's previous arrangement with the court of Alexandria (which had much more to offer her). As a result, Kyrene returned to the Ptolemaic kingdom, while the Antigonids and Seleukids lost their stakes in the region.⁹⁴

The ramifications of those conflicts reached as far as Crete, where Ptolemy extended his network of allies by including those of Magas. In reaction to this, Antiochos renewed his father's treaty with Lyttos, which at least indicated that his western ambitions were not confined to Anatolia.⁹⁵ Antiochos was even more successful in Thrace partly through conquest, and partly through a strategic alliance with Lysimacheia.⁹⁶ The position of Byzantion, which was allied with Ptolemy, was thus threatened, and the latter's further plans within the Black Sea were foreclosed.⁹⁷ That Antiochos intended to pursue his aggressive course over the next years has also been concluded from his presence in Ephesos in 246.⁹⁸

Developments in central and southern Greece were even more clearly favouring Ptolemy: the firm grip of Antigonos Gonatas was loosening with the secession of Chalkis under his commander Alexander perhaps as early as 252 BC. This was followed by revolts in Sparta as well as among the Aitolian and Achaian Leagues. All of them seem to have received or at least expected subsidies from Ptolemy, and encouraged him to seek further reversals in Greece.⁹⁹ And it may well be that he regained the upper hand in the Aegean Sea as early as 250 BC, when Gonatas lacked the resources to stop him.¹⁰⁰ These events, in turn, explain the strong interest Antiochos showed in western affairs, especially in gaining further strongholds in southern Thrace to keep his rival off the shore without re-opening the war directly. Be this as it may, Philadelphos may well have started to plan a major counter-attack while the usurpation of Andragoras in Parthia preoccupied the Seleukids and compelled Antiochos to significantly reduce his military presence in the West.

Whether the death of Philadelphos and the succession of Euergetes (28 Jan 246 BC) accelerated or slowed down the outbreak of open conflict cannot be decided with certainty,¹⁰¹ even though I am inclined to believe the latter case. The re-opening of the seas in the spring of 246 BC would have been the ideal time to strike,

94 Just. 26.3.2–8; and Hölbl 1994/2001, 43–4; Grainger 2010, 146–9; 155; McAuley in this volume (though with a slightly different chronology).

95 Grainger 2010, 139–40.

96 Polyae. 4.16; Frisch, *I.Illion* 45 B = SEG XXXI 1056 = Austin² 171. Cf. Grainger 2010, 142–5; Dumitru 2011, 349–53 (with reference to Seleukid coins struck in Lysimacheia in n. 1); also Kosmin 2014a, 89, even though with earlier dates.

97 Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 14 (23); Avram 2003; Grainger 2010, 142. This section of naval politics remains unconsidered by Reger 1994, 43–6.

98 Martinez-Sève 2002/3, 702; Errington 2008, 120; cf. Grainger 2010, 155.

99 Will 1979, I 243–8; Walbank 1988, 306; 587–95; 599–600; Reger 1994, 45–6; Grainger 2010, 151.

100 Buraselis 1982, 168–73; Gabbert 1997, 54–7. Slightly differently, Reger 1994, 43–6.

101 A preconceived plan is also conceded by Lehmann 1998, 93–4 and Grainger 2010, 151–2; 2014, 186–8.

especially as long as the Parthian crisis was believed to be ongoing. The unexpected succession in Alexandria during the winter would have cost time, and potential news of Seleukos' victory in the east may have reduced the enthusiasm for the campaign once more. But hope was reignited when Antiochos passed away around July 246, especially since Seleukos was still believed to be far away in the east with major parts of the royal army.

It was thus definitely not his sister's problems in Antioch that caused Euergetes to set sail from Alexandria, but on the contrary the threatening presence of his fleet around the southern and western shores of Asia Minor would have heightened the tension between the courts of Antioch and Ephesos. It may well be that this growing menace induced the royal guard to impose house arrest on Berenike and her son. The decision to do away with them was probably not made until the Ptolemaic navy was trying to gain access to the Seleukis.

X. CONCLUSIONS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EVIL QUEEN

If the arguments unfolded in this paper are convincing, we have to admit that we know much less about Laodike than we thought. The literary evidence for most of her spectacular deeds emerge as fictitious: the poisoning of her husband, the slaughter of his second wife and their infant son, the fraudulent proclamation of her elder son – all of these alleged crimes have to be discarded as mere fabrications.

This, of course, is not to say that the historical Laodike remains without any profile beyond her place in Seleukid genealogy. Not only was she prominent as a royal wife during the lifetime of her husband, as attested in a few epigraphic sources and systematically contextualized by G. Ramsey, but she even rose to the position of a ruling queen when her husband died.¹⁰² Possibly, Antiochos bestowed on her the *basilissa* title shortly before passing away, to enhance her authority and safeguard the interests of the dynasty at least until Seleukos the successor king would have returned. In the meantime, Laodike took state affairs into her own hands, and did so with the authority of a 'queen'. Her powerful position is sufficiently attested by Phylarchos' report on her persecution of Sophron and Danae, despite its hostile perspective, and her vigour in this pursuit seems to be confirmed further by the name that was given to the (initial stage of the) so-called Third Syrian War, even if 'Laodikean War' may never have been an official designation. Such a terminological choice would still appear to be unique in the Hellenistic world.¹⁰³

The final 'misdeed' which is commonly ascribed to Laodike is encouraging Antiochos Hierax to revolt against his brother Seleukos.¹⁰⁴ The only explicit evidence to cite for this allegation is an anecdote retold by Plutarch:

102 Ramsey forthcoming, though not with the assumption of the lateness of the royal title. Differently, Otto 1928, 50 n. 2 points out that not even *P.Gourob* (see above, n. 14), col. II ascribes the title to Laodike, though he admits that the text was designed to disqualify the rule of Seleukos and his mother.

103 For more on the 'Laodikean War', cf. Coşkun ca. 2016.

104 E. g., Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 107 (in ca. 237 BC); Macurdy 1932, 86–7 (in 241 BC); Grainger

“But Antiochos might be condemned because of his lust for dominion, yet admired because his love for his brother was not altogether extinguished thereby. For he went to war against Seleukos for the kingdom, though he was the younger brother, and had the aid of his mother.”¹⁰⁵

But as I have recently shown elsewhere, Plutarch is obviously confusing Laodike with her brother Alexander whom Porphyry/Eusebios attest as Hierax’ ally without mentioning his mother.¹⁰⁶ We should therefore better follow Appian’s brief sketch of the dynasty’s history and accept that Laodike was killed by Ptolemy (probably in August 246 BC).¹⁰⁷ This case has been argued in detail elsewhere and need not be rehearsed here.¹⁰⁸

It is, after all, the coincidence of unfortunate circumstances that resulted in the blackening of Laodike’s reputation. In stark contrast to the apolitical version first related by Phylarchos and from then on repeated and further elaborated throughout the literary tradition until the 21st century, the reason for the dynastic crisis was not the second marriage of Laodike’s husband; this in itself was much less of a threat within the polygamist context of Macedonian royalty.¹⁰⁹ The first blow rather was the premature death of Antiochos II, which was definitely not in Laodike’s interest given the major Ptolemaic threat in the Aegean; in fact, the same menace soon spelled her own violent end. Her second major problem was the success of pro-Ptolemaic and anti-Seleukid sentiments in the aftermath, mainly due to the singular authority that would accrue to Phylarchos’ account. Thirdly, this was enhanced by the fraternal discord which weakened the military and ideological potential of the Seleukids: this rift within the family forsook chances for the design of a more positive and consistent view of this dynasty that might have established itself more widely in popular opinion and thus ultimately also in the broader literary tradition.

However, all of these reasons together do not yet offer a complete explanation for the deplorable fate of Laodike’s afterlife. Another aspect needs to be accounted for: the mindsets of those who read historiography, selected individual items and newly constructed the ‘past’ by making their choices among variant narratives. A comparison with Olympias, the notorious mother of Alexander the Great and the wife of King Philip may be helpful here: among the many analogies between the lives of Laodike and Olympias as royal wives, widows and mothers, the parallels of their stained afterlives appears to be most striking. In her highly illuminating biography of Olympias, E. Carney explains the rationale of Plutarch’s judgement:¹¹⁰

1997, 47 (in 244 BC); D’Agostini and McAuley 2012 ‘Alexander’.

105 Plut. mor. 489a = *De fraterno amore* 18: Ἀντιόχου δὲ τὴν μὲν φιλαρχίαν ψέξειεν ἄν τις, ὅτι δ’ οὐ παντάπασιν αὐτῇ τὸ φιλάδελφον ἐνηφανίσθη, θαυμάσειεν. ἐπολέμει μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλείας Σελεύκῳ νεώτερος ὢν ἀδελφὸς καὶ τὴν μητέρα συλλαμβάνουσιν εἶχεν. (Transl. adapted from W. C. Helmbold, Loeb ed., 1939.)

106 Porphyry/Eus. *FGrH* 260 F 32.8. On Alexander and the House of Achaïos, cf. also D’Agostini and McAuley 2012; Coşkun ca. 2016.

107 App. Syr. 65.346; cf. Porphyry/Hieron. *FGrH* 260 F 43 for the punishment, though without mentioning Laodike’s death.

108 Coşkun ca. 2016. For an earlier defence of Laodike, cf. Nourse 2002, 269–70.

109 See above, n. 43, for references.

110 Carney 1992, 188–9, with quotations from Plut. *Alex.* 9.3. On Olympias, cf. now also Carney 2006.

“his assessment really constitutes an attack on polygamy, particularly because of the role women played in the succession politics of monarchy ... While Plutarch then proceeds to an attack on Olympias’ ill-nature, what he has made is a classic statement of Greek views about women and men and public and private: women and private matters go together and belong at home; men and politics belong to public life – any mixing of the two is pathological. Plutarch puts it bluntly, but it is an attitude which would be common to virtually all our non-Macedonian sources. In some degree this attitude lies behind Greek uncomfortableness with monarchy in general because of the personal, private nature of monarchical power. That Macedonian monarchy was polygamous exaggerated problems with the mixing of what Greeks believed should not be mixed – the more wives, the more possibility for contamination.”

All of these conclusions likewise apply to the case of Laodike, and would sufficiently account for a disregard of the Seleukid family in general or of Laodike and her offspring in particular. Yet most influential in the shaping of her image was something different: it was Phylarchos’ decision to present the dynastic marriage (252 BC) at the end of the Second Syrian War (260–253 BC) as the reason for the outbreak of the Third (246–241 BC). Accordingly, he narrates the events of the two wars in one continuum, before going back in time to describe the War of Brothers (246–242 BC). Such an arrangement could be made without getting the chronology wrong, as the fragments of Porphyry’s account show.¹¹¹ But, for the sake of simplicity, Justin felt free to redate events, so that narrative and chronological sequence coincided. Despite all its flaws and inconsistencies, Justin’s and Phylarchos’ versions have so far prevailed in modern accounts, not least because the plausibility of the moralizing connection appeared to be likewise self-evident in modern perception.

111 Cf. Primo 2009, esp. 123 who points out (in a different context) that the couple Antiochos II and Laodike have been construed as the beginning of the decline of the Seleukid House.

THE FATE OF KLEOPATRA TRYPHAINA, OR: POETIC JUSTICE IN JUSTIN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the representation of Seleukid queens in the 39th book of Justin's *Epitome* of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*. It focuses on Kleopatra Tryphaina, the sister-wife of Antiochos VIII Grypos. Tryphaina personally ordered soldiers to tear her own sister Kleopatra IV from the temple into which she had fled, and kill her. Within two years, Tryphaina met a similar fate, for Antiochos IX Kyzikenos, the husband of Kleopatra IV, sacrificed her to the shades of his wife. The scope of this study also extends to Kleopatra Thea and Kleopatra III, who both received fitting punishments in that same book, before moving on to other examples within Justin's *Epitome*. Attention will be given to Justin's distortions both of fact and of Trogus' original text. Towards the conclusion, the persona of Tryphaina is resumed, especially her alleged role in her sister's assassination and the nature of her own execution.

Justin, the epitomator – for lack of a better word¹ – of Pompeius Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, provides a unique account of the lives and deaths of the sisters Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV, both daughters of Kleopatra III.² What is remarkable in Justin's account is the priority he gives these two figures in the conflict between the brothers Antiochos VIII Grypos and Antiochos IX Kyzikenos.³ The information that Justin provides about these two kings, who were doubtless the central figures in Trogus' narrative⁴, is only enough to place the two queens in their historical context. Justin paints a very unclear picture of the war between the brothers, preferring to devote most of his attention to the fatal rivalry between the sisters Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV. The conflict between the two Seleukid kings serves to provide context for the more bitter conflict between their Ptolemaic brides and its fitting

- 1 The term epitomator, as Develin says, "is convenient, but difficult", Yardley & Develin 1994, 5–6; Yardley has also argued elsewhere that Justin believed that he was creating an autonomous work, Yardley & Heckel 1997, 15–19; Yardley 2003, 4–5.
- 2 Bennett 2001–2014 (s.v. Tryphaena) points out that no ancient source refers to Tryphaina as Kleopatra.
- 3 For the prosopographical information concerning Antiochos VIII Grypos and Antiochos IX Kyzikenos and their families, see Grainger 1997, 31–33.
- 4 Trogus' world history was dedicated to the *translatio imperii* and he dedicated much attention not only to the succession of individual kings, but also to the succession of empires, cf. Just. *prol.* 39, Bartlett 2014, 254.

closure: Tryphaina's murder of her sister and Kyzikenos' subsequent offering of Tryphaina to the shades of his wife.

The first major difficulty in the study of Justin's treatment of the conflict between the sisters is that his is the only account which survives. While Diodoros also covers this period of Seleukid history and, like Trogus, uses Poseidonios as his source, he fails to include the strife between Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV in his account.⁵ Appian too remains silent concerning the sisters. Scholars must thus rely on Justin as the only ancient source for this particular episode. The result of this dependence on Justin is a general acceptance of his account in modern scholarly works or, worse yet, the minimization of these important figures' roles; indeed, until recently, many prominent works on Hellenistic history, or Seleukid history in particular, have done little more than simply repeating Justin's account.⁶

Justin, as many scholars of the Hellenistic period are all too aware, was an awful historian; whether or not he intended to be an historian is another matter.⁷ He often conflates events and figures; these errors can be attributed to him rather than Trogus, since the *prologi* vindicate whenever the material in question is included in both sources. Unfortunately, due to the brevity of the *prologi* there is seldom an opportunity to compare Justin's work to them. Since Justin abbreviates Trogus' account so severely, there are often clues as to where Justin abbreviated and how.⁸ Themes that are developed in Trogus' narrative are abruptly cut short and left unresolved.

That Tryphaina was a cruel queen is doubtless part of the tradition that Justin received from Trogus.⁹ Indeed, what makes Justin's account remarkable is not the

- 5 Primo 2009, 174–175; Ehling 2008, 221 n. 879. While Kyzikenos' sacrifice of Tryphaina to the shades of his wife could not possibly have been found in Poseidonios, such *color romanus* is found elsewhere in Justin and its source is likely Trogus, Seel 1972, 88–104; Yardley et al 2011, 188–189.
- 6 Bevan 1902, 254–255 follows Justin's narrative, attributing to Tryphaina the same jealousy and cruelty that Justin describes, and concluding the strife between sisters with Kyzikenos' vengeance. Bouché-Leclercq 1914, 631–632 in his timeline reports that Tryphaina put her sister to death in 112. Macurdy 1932, 165 accepts Justin's account for the death of both sisters, including both Tryphaina's jealousy and Kyzikenos' pious offering to the shades of his wife. Even Whitehorne 2001, 135 and Grainger 2010, 389 accept this tradition without much question. Primo 2009, 213 n. 149, 297 does not address this issue at all, only twice mentioning Tryphaina in relation to her husband and omitting Kleopatra IV entirely. Ager ca. 2016a challenges this construction of the 'evil queen', questions the reliability of the tradition transmitted in Justin, and offers an alternate construction of Tryphaina's character: she was a good wife who bore several children (including five possible heirs), she placed her loyalty to her husband before everyone else, and she alone among her sister, Kleopatra IV; her mother, Kleopatra III; and her aunt, Kleopatra Thea is the only Ptolemaic bride who did not choose her husband but was given away by her father, Ptolemy VIII.
- 7 Jal 1987, 194–209 first argued that Justin viewed himself as an artist who was composing an autonomous work, an argument that Yardley has since supported with many convincing publications, see n. 1.
- 8 van Wickevoort Crommelin 1993, 211–239 discusses the more important themes of *imperium* and *reges* built by Trogus throughout his narrative, which are present in Justin, but largely undeveloped; Levene 2010, 299–300 further discusses the importance royalty in Trogus.
- 9 Ager ca. 2016a has argued that this version could have come from the court of Antiochos VIII

characterization of Tryphaina, but the importance he gives her in his narrative and the new relationship of cause and effect that he creates by merely omitting important details. For evidence that Justin had given far more weight to the conflict between the sisters than Pompeius Trogus, one need only look to the *prologus* of the 39th book. Neither of these royal women, Tryphaina or Kleopatra IV, appears there, and yet this episode comprises the largest of the five sections of the book. Furthermore, Justin makes little mention of the conflict between brothers after the deaths of the two sisters. While the *prologi* indicate that Trogus covered this war until its conclusion, naming the various successors of the brothers, Justin provides merely a vague outline of what happened next:

When the kings and kingdom of Syria had been consumed by inexorable war because of the mutual hatred of the brothers and their sons next inheriting the hostilities of their parents, the people rallied behind outside aid and began to look around for foreign kings for themselves.¹⁰

For Justin, the last noteworthy deeds to happen during Seleukid rule were the unspeakable cruelty of Tryphaina towards her sister and Grypos' vengeance that followed soon thereafter. Yet Justin's account, for all its flaws, is not just the most complete source both for Tryphaina and Kleopatra, but the only, as well as an important source for the two Seleukid kings to whom they were married. The significant gaps, however, that Justin leaves in his narrative tell much about his familiarity with the subject (or lack thereof), his purpose in conveying this episode, and ultimately, the nature of Pompeius Trogus' treatment of this poorly attested episode.

Justin from the beginning of his account provides a timeline that, despite its gaps and imprecision, can be corroborated by other sources. According to Justin, Grypos took Syria after defeating and putting to death the usurper Alexander II Zabinas (Just. 39.2.5–6), which took place in 123/2.¹¹ A little over a year later, 121, Kleopatra Thea, Grypos' own mother, became jealous of his success and attempted to poison him, only to be forced to drink her own poison when her plot was discovered (Just. 39.2.7–8).¹²

In what follows (39.2.9), Justin's timeline corresponds to other sources; in the aftermath of Kleopatra Thea's plot, he says that once a 'safe' rule was established (*parta regni securitate*) Grypos enjoyed eight years of peace, a number that can reasonably be attributed to Pompeius Trogus.¹³ This eight year peace ended in 113

in order to remove the blame for killing a Ptolemaic princess. Indeed, whether Ptolemaic princesses serve to legitimate Seleukid rulers, as Ogden 1999, 154–157 argues, or they merely have the potential to draw upon vast resources, Grypos had good reason to remove the wife of his rival claimant.

10 Just. 40.1.1: *Mutuis fratrum odiis et mox filiis inimiciis parentum succedentibus cum inexpabili bello et reges et regnum Syriae consumptum esset, ad externa populus auxilia concurrebat peregrinosque reges sibi circumspicere coepit.* – All translations are my own.

11 Ehling 2008, 214; Hoover 2007, 284; Houghton et al 2008, 474.

12 Ehling 2008, 215; Hoover 2007, 286; Houghton et al. 2008, 484.

13 Trogus, unlike Justin, seems to have maintained a meticulous reckoning of the regnal years of the major rulers in his work along with a strong relative timeline that made use of many landmark years, Bartlett 2014, 266; van Wickevoort Crommelin 1993, 180–185. Whitehorne 2001, 135 claims that Kyzikenos had been a rival claimant to the throne since 121, but provides no

when Antiochos IX Kyzikenos, probably in his early 20s, succeeded in invading Syria and capturing Antioch from his half-brother.¹⁴ Justin, however, is unclear as to when Grypos made an attempt on Kyzikenos' life, but the text implies that Kyzikenos' invasion of Syria was an immediate response.

Then a competitor for his [Grypos'] throne arose, his very brother Kyzikenos, begotten from the same mother, but fathered by his uncle Antiochos [VII Sidetes]. Although Grypos had wished to remove Kyzikenos with poison, he merely incited him to contend for the kingship with arms even earlier.¹⁵

This is corroborated by Appian, who tells that Kyzikenos' war was an immediate response to the poisoning attempt (App. Syr. 69).

Justin then changes his focus to Egypt to discuss the divorce of Kleopatra IV and Ptolemy IX Lathyros, and then follows Kleopatra as she set out for Syria to marry Kyzikenos in 113/2 and bring him an Egyptian garrison that had been stationed on Cyprus as a gift (39.3.3). Justin's largest gap and greatest difficulty in his timeline appears here:

Therefore, now equal to his brother's strength, Kyzikenos entered battle and, defeated, turned to flight. Then Grypos began to besiege Antioch, where Kleopatra, the wife of Kyzikenos was.¹⁶

Here Justin completely omits that Kyzikenos had invaded Syria in 113 – the last thing he said was that Grypos' plot to assassinate his half-brother failed, and resulted in hurrying his brother to arms – and that Grypos, after this loss of Syria, had fled to Aspendos (Eus. *Chron.* 1.256–260 ed. Schoene).¹⁷ The result of this omission is a confusing sequence of events; Kyzikenos, having bolstered his numbers to be equal to his brother's, flees in defeat, and his brother, who has not yet lost Antioch in Justin's narrative, begins to besiege it with Kleopatra IV, that is Kyzikenos' wife, still inside. Two details are unclear: when Kleopatra IV arrived with her army and where this battle belonged in Trogus' account. Since Justin states that Kleopatra married Kyzikenos in Syria, his invasion had clearly already begun when she arrived with her troops, if Justin is to be trusted at all. The first possibility is that Kyzikenos had already taken Antioch when his bride arrived with the garrison from Cyprus. Bellinger argued that she married Kyzikenos immediately after his successful invasion, while Houghton, Lorber and Hoover argue the wedding took place "some time" after his initial success.¹⁸ Ehling is more precise, offering the year 112 as the date of the marriage.¹⁹ The alternative is that Kyzikenos finally took Antioch with the help of his wife and her garrison from Cyprus, as Whitehorne and Grainger

evidence for this. Ehling 2008, 217 n. 846; Hoover 2007, 300 both place his claim to the throne in 113.

14 Ehling 2008, 219; Grainger 1997, 32; Houghton et al 2008, 484–5.

15 Just. 39.2.10: *Natus deinde illi [Grypo] est aemulus regni, frater ipsius Cyzicenus, eadem matre genitus, sed ex Antiocho patruo susceptus, quem cum veneno tollere voluisset, ut maturius armis cum eo de regno contenderet, excitavit.*

16 Just. 39.3.4–5: *Par igitur iam viribus fratris Cyzicenus proelium committit ac victus in fugam vertitur. Tunc Antiochiam Grypos, in qua erat Cyziceni uxor Cleopatra, obsidere coepit.*

17 Houghton et al 2008, 483, n. 7.

18 Bellinger 1949, 67–68; Houghton et al 2008, 521 n. 3.

19 Ehling 2008, 219–220.

argue.²⁰ The latter argument is not supported by Justin's account, but the illogical series of events that he provides in the above text ought to be questioned. Bellinger, in support of Justin's text, argued "Cyzicenus' army, while sufficient to drive out Grypos in an initial campaign, was not large enough to garrison and hold the cities it had won."²¹ However, since Justin never tells how Kyzikenos came to be in possession of Antioch in the first place, it is more reasonable to imagine that Justin must have conflated Kyzikenos' capture of Antioch with Grypos' return from Aspendos and retaking of the city (Eus. *Chron.* 1.259–260 ed. Schoene). It is certainly not unprecedented for Justin to confuse individuals and conflate events.²²

Justin, once finished with his incomplete description of the war, delves into far more detail for one small episode that took place after Grypos first retook Antioch in 112: Tryphaina's murder of her sister Kleopatra IV. Here it becomes apparent that Justin, and most likely Trogus and his sources, sought to absolve Grypos of the murder of Kleopatra IV and place the blame squarely on the shoulders of his cruel wife Tryphaina.

In the account, Tryphaina's arguments in favour of killing her sister are all either untrue or self-serving. First, Tryphaina reduces her sister's motives for entering the war between the two brothers to *aemulatio*, rivalry or perhaps jealousy (39.3.5). Second, the queen states that Kleopatra had wed Kyzikenos after being repudiated by her brother (39.3.6), although Justin had just previously made clear that the king did not do this willingly, but was compelled to repudiate her (39.3.2). In fact, Justin explicitly states that the queen was not so much repudiated by her husband as she was divorced from her husband by her mother (39.3.3). Finally, the queen's grievance that foreign forces were introduced into the war by Kleopatra IV as a wedding gift can only seem insincere when Justin, just a few sentences prior, had said:

Therefore [Ptolemy] sent Grypos many auxiliaries and his daughter Tryphaina to marry Grypos so that he might stir the peoples in support of his descendant not only by a military alliance but also by his own familial bond.²³

A little more than a decade earlier Grypos had gained control of Syria with the foreign troops that Ptolemy Physkon had provided to him, along with his daughter Tryphaina in marriage. Grypos responds to his wife's demands with an appeal for mercy, wherein he states the numerous reasons to spare the captured Ptolemaic queen:

Grypos pleaded otherwise, that he not be compelled to commit so hideous a crime. In victory none of his ancestors, during so many civil and foreign wars, had ever acted cruelly towards

20 Whitehorne 2001, 135; Grainger 2010, 389.

21 Bellinger 1949, 68.

22 Bartlett 2014, 255, n. 42. Justin later confuses Antiochos X with Antiochos XIII, Ehling 2008, 51; Hoover 2007, 291. Coşkun ca. 2016 challenges Justin's order of events in the Third Syrian War (Just. 27.2.1–5) and the ambiguous circumstances for Seleukos II Kallinikos' flight to Antioch, see also the same concerning 'Eumenes of Bithynia'.

23 Just. 39.2.3: [*Ptolomaeus*] *mittit igitur ingentia Grypo auxilia et filiam Tryphaenam Grypo nupturam, ut populos in auxilium nepotis non societate tantum belli verum et adfinitate sua sollicitet.*

women, whom their very sex spares from the perils of war and the cruelty of victors; indeed, in the case of this woman, in addition to the common law of belligerents there was the bond of blood. Indeed, Kleopatra was the very sister of Tryphaina who was so mad with blood-lust, his own kin, the aunt of their children.²⁴

Grypos begs for his wife to relent and spare her sister, and while his pleas are reasonable, Grypos has certainly failed to establish his ethos. First, Grypos argues that women are exempt from the horrors of war, as is custom, and that blood ties also demand clemency (39.3.8), but he showed no such clemency to his own mother after her attempt to poison him. Whitehorne has raised the question whether the tradition that Kleopatra first made an attempt on Grypos' life can be trusted, but whether or not Kleopatra Thea had actually attempted to poison her son is irrelevant to Justin's narrative, where Grypos is presented as justified.²⁵ Second, the 'bond of blood' that should protect Kleopatra IV from Tryphaina did not previously prevent Grypos from attempting to poison his own half-brother.

Justin continues his negative characterization of Tryphaina with her response to her husband's appeals. We are told that the more Grypos refused Tryphaina, the more she was incensed 'with womanly stubbornness' (*muliebri pertinacia*), believing that her husband was not motivated by pity but lust (39.3.10). This is the third time in Justin's account that a woman is described as jealous: first Kleopatra II Thea had attempted to poison her son, 'pained by the fact that her own esteem was diminished by his victory' (39.2.7); next Tryphaina accused her sister of marrying Kyzikenos out of jealousy. Such limitation of women's motivations to jealousy is a commonplace in ancient historiography.²⁶

Ultimately Tryphaina accomplished her goal. Soldiers under her orders entered the temple where Kleopatra IV had taken refuge and, unable to remove her, cut off her hands as they still clinged to the statue of the goddess (39.3.10). Kleopatra then cursed her murderers and entrusted her vengeance to the violated *numina* of the temple (39.3.11). The events that follow in Justin's narrative provide a great example of the abbreviated nature of his text being used to great rhetorical effect. In the very next sentence after the murder of Kleopatra IV, Justin writes:

24 Just. 39.2.7–8: *Contra Grypos orare, ne tam foedum facinus facere cogatur. A nullo umquam maiorum suorum inter tot domestica, tot externa bella post victoriam in feminas saevitum, quas sexus ipse et periculis bellorum et saevitiae victorum eximat; in hac vero praeter commune bellantium fas accedere necessitudinem sanguinis; quippe ipsius, quae tam cruenta saeviat, sororem equidem germanam esse, suam vero consobrinam, liberorum deinde communium materteram.*

25 Whitehorne 2001, 162–3 points out that Grypos had previously poisoned Alexander II Zabinas, attempted to dispose of his brother Antiochos IX Kyzikenos' in such a way, and had also composed a series of verses on the subject of poison, see Galen (Kühn) 14, p. 185. Whitehorne, however, provides no evidence that Grypos poisoned Alexander; Diodoros 34/35.28.1–3 does not include his death, and Justin 39.2.6 and Josephus *AJ.* 13.9.3 only say that Grypos killed him, not how. Whitehorne may have conflated Justin 39.2 with Porphyrios (Eus. *Chron.*, 1.257 ed. Schoene), an account where Alexander II killed himself with poison. Ager ca. 2016a follows this line of questioning and asks whether it should be so easily accepted that Tryphaina ordered the death of Kleopatra IV.

26 Ager ca. 2016a.

Not much later, after battle had been joined again, the victor Kyzikenos captured Tryphaina, wife of Grypos, who had shortly before killed her own sister, and with her punishment appeased the shades of his wife.²⁷

Justin does not tell us that Kyzikenos had regained control of Antioch, if only briefly, the next year.²⁸ The brevity of Justin's treatment of Tryphaina's punishment both undermines and confirms the moral lesson. If Justin were solely interested in retelling the story of Tryphaina's fitting demise, one would expect him to emphasize the parallels between the position in which Tryphaina found herself after the fall of Antioch and what Kleopatra IV had faced when the city had fallen to Grypos. However, the reduction of all other historical information between the murder of Kleopatra IV and Tryphaina's own death to a brief phrase, '*repetita proelii congressione*', and also the emphasis on how little time had elapsed underscores the immediacy of her punishment. Justin's redundant use of *nec multo post* and *paulo ante* in the same sentence emphasizes the swiftness of Tryphaina's punishment. This pairing is unique to Justin, occurring elsewhere in his *Epitome* (20.5.14) and nowhere else in Latin literature. Moreover, the pair is most likely the accidental result of Justin's need to connect two distinct events in Trogus with a vague indication of the passage of time (*nec multo post*) and the survival of phrases from Trogus' original text in Justin's *Epitome* (*paulo ante*).²⁹

One striking parallel that can be found in Justin's *Epitome* is the War of Brothers, which encompasses much of the 27th book. Coşkun (in this volume) argues that Justin manipulated the chronological order of the Third Syrian War and the War of Brothers in order to be able to end the book with a fitting moral conclusion about the value of brotherly love.³⁰ Justin, however, ignores the same chance in this passage; little concern is given to the deleterious effects that this war had for the Seleukid Empire and how much was lost as a result of the infighting between the two brothers. Ehling notes that this strife between Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV complements the war between the half-brothers.³¹ Ehling notes that this strife between Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV complements the war between the half-brothers.³² What may be more accurate, at least for describing Justin's narrative, is that the war between the half-brothers complements the strife between the sisters, which Justin has emphasized far more than his source. If the 27th book was to be dedicated to the War of Brothers, then for the 39th book Justin creates a "War of Sisters" that feels like an isolated episode, with little impact on the rest of the Seleukid Empire.

27 Just. 39.3.12: *Nec multo post repetita proelii congressione victor Cyzicenus uxorem Grypi Tryphaenam, quae paulo ante sororem interfecerat, capit eiusque supplicio uxoris manibus parentavit.*

28 The only clear evidence of Kyzikenos' second capture of Antioch in 110/9 is from Antiochene bronzes, Houghton et al 2008, 521, n. 6.

29 For Bartlett 2014, 275–8 it is far more reasonable that Trogus, after detailing Grypos' invasion the next year, would feel compelled to remind his reader of Tryphaina's crime than Justin would need to make a similar reminder in the very next sentence.

30 Coşkun ca. 2016.

31 Grainger 1997, 32–33; 2010, 389–393; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 225–228.

32 Ehling 2008, 220.

The story of one queen's brutal murder of her sister and her own swift and just punishment that follows is the sort of exemplary tale for which Justin claims to have abbreviated Trogus' *Historiae* in his preface:

I have excerpted everything that is most worthy of recognition and have made a summary, just like a small bouquet of flowers, by omitting whatever was not pleasing to know or was not required for a model, in order that those who had learned Greek might be reminded by this work or those who had not learned might be educated.³³

It is, however, not only the exemplary nature of this story that seized the epitomator's attention. The full treatment of this episode – which includes Tryphaina's arguments, Grypos' attempts at dissuasion, Tryphaina's anger at her husband's initial refusal, and ultimately the murder of Kleopatra IV followed shortly by Tryphaina's much-deserved execution – is in part due to Justin's own preference for oratory. Yardley, in fact, has written a great deal to support the thesis that Justin was a teacher of rhetoric and the *Epitome* was designed for rhetorical schools.³⁴ While Justin did inform us of Tryphaina's punishment, there is another example where Justin provides a lengthy oration, but omits the morally pleasing ending that Trogus had doubtless provided; earlier in the *Epitome*, Eumenes of Kardia castigates the Argyraspids for deserting him and betraying him to his foe Antigonos I, and at the end of the speech he curses the soldiers to spend the rest of their lives exiled to their camps (14.4.1–14). Yet Justin fails to show how this curse was fulfilled, despite the fact that that fate befell many of the Argyraspids and that Justin's is the only version of the speech that contains the curse.³⁵

As briefly mentioned earlier, Justin is a bad historian. He omits a large portion of Trogus' work, often providing a worse overview of events than the very minimal *prologi*. Justin's narrative is often a series of disjointed episodes, failing to provide a cohesive whole, unlike others such as Appian or Diodoros, who also provided derivative accounts of Hellenistic history. Unlike these other historians, Justin seems quite capricious, at times including small, almost unnoteworthy events, while failing to mention major events. Justin's disregard for the bigger picture, however, leads to the inclusion of episodes due to their extreme nature and heavily charged rhetoric, regardless of importance. In order to provide the rhetoric and the accompanying moral exemplum of the War of Sisters, Justin severely abbreviates Trogus' account, conflates events, and robs the episode of much of its historical context. This method for selection made it possible for Justin to include what other later historians did not: the story of two queens in a declining empire whose internal conflicts had always been poorly attested in the historical record. Justin's *Epitome* is not without its problems, but its approach to Trogus' universal history, to include its material based on rhetorical or exemplary merit rather than historical significance, preserved an otherwise unattested event that had little immediate impact and took place between two women, whose lives are often neglected by historians.

33 Just. *praef.* 4: *Cognitione quaeque dignissima excerpsi et omissis his, quae nec cognoscendi voluptate iucunda nec exemplo erant necessaria, breve veluti florum corpusculum feci, ut haberent et qui Graece didicissent, quo admonerentur, et qui non didicissent, quo instruerentur.*

34 Yardley & Heckel 1997, 8–13; Yardley 2003, 5 & 181.

35 Bartlett 2014, 271–3, cf. Diod. 19.48.3–4, Plut. *Eum.* 19.2.

FEMALE SELEUKID PORTRAITS: WHERE ARE THEY?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evidence for portraiture of royal women in the first century and a half of the Seleukid Empire. Literary, numismatic, epigraphic, and art historical sources are reviewed and analyzed, and methodological questions are raised. The available evidence seems to suggest that, unlike their contemporaries in Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleukid royals did not promote the visibility of their women until early in the second century. Our first surviving numismatic portrait of a Seleukid female is Laodike IV, on coinage issued by her brother-husband, Seleukos IV; her successor, Laodike V, appears in jugate fashion on coinage with her husband, Demetrios I. After Laodike V, Ptolemaic princesses begin to enter the Seleukid line, and the numismatic evidence bears clear marks of Ptolemaic influence. Such influence may already have begun to infiltrate the Seleukid dynasty by the end of the third century: judging from the epigraphic evidence, Antiochos III may have been more open to the promotion of visible royal females than his predecessors in the Seleukid house.

In this paper we explore an ‘anti-phenomenon’: the apparent material invisibility of Seleukid queens, at least in the first century and a half of Seleukid rule. Our discussion therefore brings with it all the well-known challenges and problems inherent in arguments made *e silentio*. Methodological and evidentiary challenges loom large in any inquiry into a non-event, and we are well aware that negative findings are particularly susceptible to the hazards of subsequent discovery. We have therefore shaped this paper as an ongoing discussion, rather than an attempt to establish any kind of sharply defined long-term ‘answer’. We have identified a few areas for further inquiry and posed methodological questions that others might wish to pursue.

I. SOURCES AND APPROACHES

1. The Queens

We have tried to draw certain parameters around this vast and rather inchoate question, which in its size and resistance-to-definability is not unlike the Seleukid Empire itself. Seleukid ‘queens’ are here defined as women (whatever their origin) who were either the consort or the mother of a ruling Seleukid king: Apama, the Iranian wife of Seleukos I and mother of Antiochos I; Stratonike, wife of Seleukos I and of Antiochos I in succession, and mother of the latter’s son Antiochos II; Laodike I, wife of Antiochos II and mother of Seleukos II and Antiochos Hierax;

Berenike ‘Syra’, daughter of Ptolemy II, wife of Antiochos II and mother of Antiochos II’s youngest son Antiochos;¹ Laodike II, wife of Seleukos II and mother of Seleukos III and Antiochos III; Laodike III, wife of Antiochos III and mother of Antiochos the Son, Seleukos IV, Antiochos IV, and Laodike IV; Euboia, wife of Antiochos III;² and Laodike IV, daughter of Antiochos III and Laodike III, wife of – perhaps – all three of her brothers in succession, and mother of Seleukos IV’s son Antiochos and Antiochos IV’s son Antiochos V.³ We have therefore not dealt with other Seleukid women who might lay claim to the title *basilissa*, such as Antiochos III’s daughter Antiochis, whom he married to Ariarathes of Cappadocia.⁴

Our temporal parameters are defined for us by the rather sudden appearance of Laodike IV in the numismatic record. She is the first of the Seleukid queens to appear on coinage, and her numismatic presence is quite extensive: she appears on coins minted by her brother-husbands Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV, the latter apparently adopting the style of his predecessor.⁵ There is also a single issue of what Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover designate as ‘quasi-municipal’ bronze coinage from Tripolis, featuring Antiochos IV and Laodike IV together in jugate fashion.⁶ Laodike herself may have been responsible for minting a gold octadrachm series in the fall of 175 BC, during the brief interregnum after the death of her husband Seleukos, a series which featured the queen jugate with her young son Antiochos (Fig. 1).⁷

1 Called ‘Syra’ (‘the Syrian’) here to distinguish her from the other Berenikes of the Ptolemaic line.

2 Euboia, Antiochos III’s Chalkidian wife, is something of an anomaly in this list. We have no record suggesting that she was ever ‘crowned’ or bore the title *basilissa*, while we have explicit evidence that Antiochos III’s other wife, his cousin Laodike III, was in fact made his ‘queen’ by a ceremony separate from the marriage (Polyb. 5.43).

3 There is no standard numbering system for the Laodikai of the Seleukid kingdom. The system adopted here conforms to our definition of ‘queens’ as women who were married to and/or mothered Seleukid kings (or potential kings); it also adheres to the numbering employed by Dodd 2009.

4 App. Syr. 5.

5 SC II 2, 4, 17, 24, 38–9, 44–5, 47, 66–7, 71–2, 90–1 and nos. 1318, 1332, 1371, 1407, 1421, 1422, 1477. This coinage, with its serrated edges, is sometimes referred to as the ‘bottle-cap’ coinage. We follow Fleischer 1991 (25 and 39) in rejecting the alleged coin portraits of Laodike I and Euboia. For a discussion of Seleukid women on coins see Dodd 2009 (200–6 on Laodike IV).

6 SC II 79 and no. 1441. Bielman-Sánchez (2003, 55) is mistaken in claiming that in this issue Laodike’s profile is in the foreground.

7 SC II 35–8 and no. 1368 (typographical error on plate 4: 1638b should read 1368).



Figure 1: Jugate Coin of Laodike IV and Her Son Antiochos.
(Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008, SC II no. 1368 [mistyped as 1638]).

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None of the coins featuring Laodike IV's portrait actually names the queen. This fact should be kept in mind: considerable numismatic and art-historical investigation has gone into the identification of Laodike on these coin series, and simply to assert that 'we have numerous coin portraits of Laodike IV' obscures the amount of diligence and foundational research that has resulted in the identification of these portraits.⁸ The authors of this paper accept their designation as Laodike IV but wish to emphasize the methodological and evidentiary point: Laodike IV, unlike her counterparts in the Ptolemaic kingdom, is never named on the coinage that features her image.

There is a further challenge of identification when it comes to Laodike IV. It is by no means certain that the wife of Antiochos the Son (Antiochos III's son, who predeceased his father), the wife of Seleukos IV, and the wife of Antiochos IV were all one and the same person. Modern scholarship tends to favour this tidy Occam's razor solution, but there are those who argue against the view that the daughter of Antiochos III and Laodike III did indeed marry all three of her brothers and bear children over such an extensive period of time. One piece of evidence that does disrupt the tidiness of the prevailing view is the Babylonian record. The Babylonian astronomical diary from the year 182/1 BC reports the following:

That month, the 7th day, rumour of Laodike,
the wife of king Seleukos, came to king Seleukos.....
to Seleucia on the Tigris
and on the royal canal. Mourning and lamentation were held in it.
The 9th day, the rumour was heard in Babylon
as follows: Fate has carried off the queen.....⁹

If Laodike, wife of Seleukos IV, did die before 180, then she clearly cannot be the Laodike who married Antiochos IV, nor is she likely to have been featured on the latter's coinage, though it is just conceivable (if quite improbable) that the dead queen might have appeared with her young son on the gold coinage minted in the wake of Seleukos IV's death. As with the identification of the coin portraits, how-

8 The scholarship is summarized and cited in Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover's valuable collection *Seleucid Coins* (volume II).

9 Sachs and Hunger 1989, 385, no. 181.

ever, we accept for the sake of argument the view that Laodike, daughter of Antiochos III, did live to marry all three of her brothers.¹⁰

After Laodike IV our next example of a Seleukid queen on coinage is Laodike V, the wife of Demetrios I, who appears in jugate fashion with her husband on gold, silver, and bronze coinage.¹¹ And after her, the Ptolemaic princesses, starting with Kleopatra Thea, begin to infiltrate the Seleukid kingdom. Thereafter the numismatic question – are the coin portraits inspired by Seleukid policies and programs or by Ptolemaic ones? – becomes as hopelessly tangled as the marital relationships themselves.¹² As far as we know, then, Laodike IV and Laodike V are the only Seleukid-born queens ever to appear on Seleukid coinage. And since we are not truly certain of the identity of the Laodike who married Demetrios I, it is possible that Laodike IV is in fact a singularity: the only Seleukid-born queen ever to appear on the coinage of the Seleukid realm. Even if Laodike V, wife of Demetrios I, was the daughter of Laodike IV and Seleukos IV, we still must conclude that in the roughly 250 years that the Seleukid dynasty lasted, only two of its native-born queens ever had a numismatic presence.¹³

2. *Coinage and Sculpture*

The discussion of coinage begs the observation that, since one of the chief methods of identifying sculpted Hellenistic portraits is by comparison with numismatic images, the numismatic evidence is crucial in our exploration of the alleged ‘invisibility’ of Seleukid royal females. R. R. R. Smith summarizes succinctly the challenge of identifying extant portraits and the importance of the numismatic evidence:

We have very few non-Ptolemaic queens, both because they are hard to recognize consistently and because probably few have survived ... We can recognize queens securely by any one of three criteria: sure royal insignia; context (e.g., paired with a king); identity or reasonable proximity to a known coin type.¹⁴

In other words, it is quite possible that we do possess some sculpted portraits of earlier Seleukid queens – we just do not know that we have them because we have

10 See Mørholm 1964, Le Rider 1986, Fleischer 1991: 41–3, Meyer 1992/3, Hollis 1996, Le Rider 1999 I: 182–9, Hoover 2002, Iossif and Lorber 2007, and *SC* II 35, 41.

11 *SC* II nos. 1683, 1684, 1686–9, 1691. Note on the numbering of Laodike V: she is here called Laodike V because she is the next Seleukid queen after Laodike IV. Some, however, use the numeration ‘Laodike V’ to refer to the Laodike (daughter of Seleukos IV) who married Perseus of Macedon, and it is not certain (though many believe it to be the case) that the Laodike who married Perseus subsequently returned to the Seleukid realm after the downfall of Antigonid Macedon and married the man who would thus have been her brother, Demetrios I. Dodd 2009 argues that the woman who appears on these coins is Demetrios’ mother Laodike IV (205–6).

12 Kleopatra Thea has considerable numismatic presence, mostly via her image, though occasionally with simply her name (*SC* II nos. 1840, 1841, 1843–6, 1860–1, 2258–77). Kleopatra IV and Tryphaina do not appear on the coinage. Kleopatra Selene appears jugate with her son Antiochos XIII (*SC* II nos. 2484–6). See also Houghton 1988; Meyer 1992/3.

13 Cf. the observations of Bielman Sánchez 2003, 55.

14 Smith 1988, 89.

no coins with which to compare them. Queens can pose a further obstacle because of the challenge in distinguishing them not only from goddesses on the one hand, but also ordinary women on the other.¹⁵ A veil worn over the head can obscure a diadem and prevent us from determining if the portrait is one of a royal female. The challenges of sculptural identification therefore bring us back to the numismatic invisibility of early Seleukid women, an invisibility that stands in stark contrast to Ptolemaic numismatic practice in the third century.

There is a further reason for focusing on numismatic invisibility over sculpted invisibility, though again we have to be wary of the dangers of the *e silentio* approach. Sculptures and coins, like all material evidence, are both subject to accidents of survival. Statistically speaking, however, the more numerous production and wider dissemination of coins mean that we are more likely today to have a reasonably representative sample of them than we do of statuary. If we were to find, say, three new identifiable sculpted portraits of third-century Seleukid queens, it would necessitate a complete revision of the entire subject; but it seems unlikely that new numismatic finds will fundamentally alter our picture of the overall pattern of Seleukid coinage, although there is always the welcome chance of uncovering a completely new and rare issue. We are therefore more comfortable with asserting here that Seleukid women in the third century were materially invisible in the coinage than we are in concluding that they were invisible in other material ways as well.

Nevertheless, the issue of the survival of material remains (other than coinage) deserves some discussion in this context. One could simply fall back on the truism that we are at the hands of the fates as to what has or has not survived in the material record. Perhaps this is nowhere more applicable than in the Seleukid Empire – vast, sparsely populated, and prey to successive invasions over the centuries, it is little wonder that few material remains of any sort have survived. The capital city of Antioch is an instructive example.

Excavations began in 1932 and continued extensively throughout the 1930s.¹⁶ From that time until the general cessation of sporadic activity in the late 1960s, archaeologists were largely concerned with uncovering the remains as referenced in such authors as the fourth-century rhetorician Libanios, the sixth-century historian John Malalas and, of course, the Bible.¹⁷ Their focus on the later Roman remains of Antioch was natural, but this focus may also have been necessitated by a series of destructions that occurred between the second and the sixth centuries AD – earthquakes in AD 115, 526, and 528 (the first of which almost killed the emperor Trajan), along with a great fire in 525, a Persian invasion in 540, and an outbreak of the bubonic plague in 568. From 638 until the tenth century the city was under Arab rule; it then experienced a brief period as a Frankish outpost during the crusades.

15 See Smith 1988, 2, 89; Dillon 2007.

16 For the excavation reports, see Elderkin 1934; Stillwell 1938; Stillwell 1941. The general excavation history is summarized by Kondoleon 2000, 5–8. Also important for their analyses of early material are Müller 1839; Downey 1961; Downey 1962; Downey 1963; Lassus 1984.

17 Libanios, *Antiochikos* = *Oratio* XI; Malalas, *Chronographia*; Acts 11.19; 11.22; 11.26; 13.14–50. In general, see Libanios (Norman 1977); Malalas (Jeffreys et al. 1984); Bouchier 1921; Downey 1963.

Thus the various excavation sponsors (the Louvre, Dumbarton Oaks, and eventually the Turkish Government) concentrated on the various churches, imperial palaces and late antique monuments, with little or no attention to what might (or might not after the sixth century) have remained from the city's earliest days.

In 2000, there was a major touring exhibition entitled 'Antioch: The Lost City'; a brief survey of the material in the exhibition catalogue illustrates the problem. The material, finally brought together from the various sponsors of the excavations, in some cases for the first time, was almost exclusively from the second through the fourth centuries AD.¹⁸ In fact, there is very little that has come to light between the date of the city's foundation in 300 BC and 64 BC, when the city was made the centre of the province of Syria, other than segments of the theatre on the slopes of Mt. Silpius. This situation might seem to be easily explained: natural destructions, invading populations, and poor early archaeological practices (to say nothing of the fact that the Seleukids of course had multiple royal centres) – all could have contributed to the lack of Hellenistic evidence. And yet, is the situation at Antioch very different from that at any other of the great and growing Hellenistic cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Alexandria, Pergamon, or Ephesos? Each of these cities suffered many of the same calamities as Antioch and still managed to offer up a wealth of material that attests to the display habits of the royals who lived there. It is unfortunate that over the last few decades, as erosion has begun to expose some remains in Antioch, many of the locals have destroyed the material in the hopes of gaining arable and liveable land.¹⁹ With little protection, what may in fact still survive from the Hellenistic period is rapidly being lost.

All of this is to suggest that there may be something beyond the mere vicissitudes of time when it comes to the paucity of material evidence for the Seleukid Empire in general and for the topic at hand specifically. If we assume that the Seleukids were just as careful about spending vast sums on lavish dedications and decorations in their capital cities as the other Hellenistic monarchs, and that they had many of the same dynastic and religious-political messages to convey to their subject populations, then the lack of Seleukid royal portraits, and for our purposes female royal portraits, is telling indeed.²⁰

There is another methodological issue that is of some significance to this discussion: the whole question of 'invisibility' itself. We have no secure material portraiture of Seleukid queens until Laodike IV,²¹ but the earlier queens were by no

18 Kondoleon 2000.

19 This is most acute for Antioch, given the modern city of Antakya which overlays it, but may be seen throughout the Amuq valley, especially after the draining of the lake of Antioch in the 1950s and 1960s. On the diminishing archaeological record in the region, see Yener 2005, 28–33.

20 Though outside the scope of this particular paper, this phenomenon seems to extend even beyond the borders of the empire to the great centres of Hellenistic royal patronage like Delphi, Delos or Didyma, where Seleukid euergetism seems on the whole to be less in total volume than that of other Hellenistic monarchs. Access to some of these sites may have been more challenging for the Seleukids (particularly after the Peace of Apameia), but perhaps difficulty of access would have been offset by the dynasty's devotion to Apollo as founder of their line.

21 With the exception of a possible seal portrait of Laodike III, discussed by Iossif and Lorber

means completely ‘invisible’. Some of them, such as Stratonike and Laodike III, had a very visible epigraphic presence, which includes the Babylonian cuneiform documents, while others, such as Laodike I, play quite a lively role in the literary tradition.²² Female ‘liveliness’ of the latter sort has a tendency to be seen as dangerous and wicked in the literary sources – we could contrast the positive portrayals of Stratonike’s love story in the literature, but then, Stratonike is not very lively in her own story.²³ Epigraphic liveliness, on the other hand, can be a much more positive thing for a queen. We therefore need to keep in mind that on some levels Seleukid queens could be quite visible indeed, including, no doubt, their presence in court society: one of the significant roles of a Hellenistic queen was to create a dynastic tie through marriage, and it is hard to believe that queens were not visibly prominent at their own weddings.²⁴ Symbolically, they were extremely visible in the numerous city foundations – the Laodikeias, the Apameias, and the Stratonikeias – as well as in the various benefactions for which they were responsible.²⁵

To sum up the discussion so far, our perception of the dearth of early Seleukid female portraits springs from the following: (i) there is a complete lack of royal female images in the numismatic record until the early second century; (ii) numismatic images are one of the keys to identifying sculpted images, and we are therefore at an obvious disadvantage in finding Seleukid women; and (iii) sculpted images of non-Ptolemaic Hellenistic queens are themselves scanty. R.R.R. Smith comments on the possibility that few such portraits survived. That is not necessarily to say, however, that few were produced, and we do have other means to investigate the latter proposition. The question now becomes: were the earlier Seleukid queens invisible in antiquity or are they simply invisible now?

On the numismatic front, as we have seen, the answer seems to be yes to both questions, at least until the early second century. On the sculpted front, aside from the considerations of survival discussed above, one avenue of evidence for investigating the existence of royal female portraits in antiquity is that of epigraphy. We do have some epigraphic evidence for portrait statues of Seleukid women, but before proceeding to examine it, there are one or two other methodological points to raise. For instance, we are reasonably comfortable in saying that we have carried out a fairly comprehensive (if not perhaps absolutely exhaustive) survey of the epigraphic testimonia for Seleukid queens, but we have not at this stage attempted to do anything similar for the other kingdoms. So any attempt to draw comparative conclusions of a statistical kind is naturally impossible. Not to mention (and we shall return to this below), a straightforward comparison of the evidence for royal female portraiture across the kingdoms is inevitably skewed in any case, even if we were

2007; see further below.

22 See, e.g., Coşkun, in this volume.

23 On Stratonike, see Almagor; Engels and Erickson; Harders, in this volume.

24 Ager ca. 2016b.

25 On Seleukid city foundations, App. Syr. 9.57; Cohen 1995 and 2006; Bielman-Sánchez 2003, 52. On the benefactions of Seleukid queens: Gauthier 1985, 75; Ameling 1995; Bringmann 2000; Bielman-Sánchez 2003; Savalli-Lestrade 2003a and b.

in possession of every last scrap of evidence, simply because the nature of such evidence varies so greatly.

Since we do have some epigraphic evidence for material portraits of the Seleukid queens, how do we interpret the amount, even without trying to compare it with the other kingdoms? Is it a little bit of evidence or is it a lot? Does the epigraphic evidence suggest that they did have a few royal female portrait sculptures, but not nearly as many as 'one might expect'? Just how much should we expect? Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt state the following: 'From the start of the Seleukid dynasty, the queen had won public recognition and honours, such as honorific statues, from Greek cities in and outside the empire.'²⁶ This comment might seem to suggest a reasonably healthy degree of portraiture; but it is surely based on the same set of inscriptions we found, and regardless of any problematic issues of comparison or expectation, these inscriptions constitute only a handful.

It is possible that we are misconstruing Sherwin-White and Kuhrt's meaning here, though the tone of their comment does seem to suggest that honours (and statues) for royal females meet (or exceed?) expectations. They also discuss the evidence for Seleukid male portraiture, and here it seems that their take on the surviving record tends the other way: 'no sculpted portrait attribution [of the Seleukid kings] is certain ... The inscribed dedication bases of many royal statues of Seleukid kings have survived, but not, alas, the statues that went with them.'²⁷ The available evidence for both male and female statuary, then, seems to be equivalent: epigraphic evidence, but no surviving sculpted portraits of which we can be certain. Yet the existence of (epigraphic) evidence for royal female portraiture is considered noteworthy, while what is noteworthy about royal male portraiture is the non-existence of (sculpted) evidence. Since Sherwin-White and Kuhrt were not making any kind of claims about statistical comparisons between male and female, or between kingdoms, it would be unfair to criticize them on such grounds. In fact, our remarks are not at all intended to be critical; rather, we simply wish to highlight the (at times unconscious) expectations with which scholars can approach the ancient evidence.

3. Epigraphy

The epigraphic evidence for royal female portraiture in the first century and a half of Seleukid rule tends to fall into two often overlapping categories: (i) honorary inscriptions (usually for benefactions received), indicating that a statue would have been raised; and (ii) inscriptions relating to royal cult, with the implication – or the outright statement – that there would also have been some kind of cult image.²⁸ The evidence, then, though it may be sparser, is not qualitatively different from what it

²⁶ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 127.

²⁷ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 130.

²⁸ On cult and honorific statues for rulers see Smith 1988, 15–20; Schmidt-Dounas 1993/94; Bielman-Sánchez 2003, 52–5; Kunst 2007; Dillon 2010; Ma 2012. The question of the degree to which honorific or cult images actually constituted recognizable portraits is of course another matter. Queens were not the only females honoured for benefactions in the Hellenistic

would be for kings. For early Seleukid queens, we can discern with reasonable certainty the following epigraphic evidence for images:²⁹

Table 1

Apama	An honorific statue dedicated by the people of Miletos: ...[τοὺς δὲ ἀνατάκτας τοὺς ἐπὶ στεφάνῃ]νηφόρου τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ μετ' Ἀθήναιον ἐξελεῖν εἰς τὴν εἰς <u>ἐλπίδα</u> ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς προοσόδου τῇ[ς – τὸ ἀργύριον]... [Honorary inscription, 299/8 BC; Ameling 1995 no. 281 [E2]; Kotsidu 2000 no. 269 [E1]].³⁰ [<u>βασίλισσαν</u> Ἀπάμην βασιλέως Σελεύκου γυναῖκα] [ὁ δῆμος] ὁ Μιλησίων Ἀρ[τέμιδι τῇ ἐν Διδύμοις]. [Statue base from Didyma; Kotsidu 2000 no. 269 [E2]].
Stratonike	An honorific statue on Delos, evidently intended to stand in the temple:³¹ ... ἐπειδὴ Τελε[σί]νος ἐγλαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Δηλίων <u>ἀγάλματα</u> ποιῆσαι τοῦ τε Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τῆς <u>βασίλειας Στρατονίκης</u> ἐπέδωκε τῷ δ[ήμ]ωι [κ]α[ι] ἐπόησεν τὰ ἀγάλματα ταῦτα τὸ μὲν τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ χαλκοῦν, <u>τὸ δὲ τῆς βα[σι]λίσ[σ]ης λίθινον</u>?, ἡργάσ[α]το? δὲ τὰ ἀγάλ[μα]τα καλῶς καὶ ἐσπούδασεν ... [Honorary decree for the Athenian sculptor Telesinos from the people of Delos, beginning of third century BC; Kotsidu 2000 no. 123 [E]].
Laodike I	None
Berenike Syra ³²	An honorific statue (?) dedicated by the people of Samos:³³ <u>βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου Σωτήρος</u> θυγατέρα <u>βασίλισσαν</u> <u>Βερενίκην</u> ὁ δῆμος ὁ Σαμί[ων] Ἦρηι. [Honorary inscription on marble base, as early as 281 and perhaps as late as 243/2 BC; Kotsidu 2000 no. 178 [E]].³⁴
Laodike II	None

period; such statues were not intrinsically 'royal' (i. e., restricted to royalty); see Bielman 2012; Ma 2012 and 2013.

29 We have only included here honorific inscriptions that directly or indirectly reference images; there are of course other inscriptions that reference honours for queens.

30 Cf. Ramsey, in this volume.

31 For multiple donations by Stratonike to the sanctuary on Delos, see Ameling 1995 nos. 156–166.

32 The famous but fragmentary inscription from Kildara that references Queen Berenike and her son King Antiochos does not clearly imply an honorific portrait (and is in any case of Ptolemaic rather than Seleukid inspiration); Blümel 1992.

33 The phrasing is precisely similar to that on the statue base of Apama.

34 Ma 2013, 26, suggests a date around 270 BC.

Laodike III	Honorific/cult statues of Laodike and her husband Antiochos III, to be placed next to the statue of Dionysos, dedicated by the people of Teos: ... π[α]ραστήσαι τῶι ἀγάλματι τοῦ Διονύσου <u>ἀγάλματα μαρμάρινα</u> ὡς κάλλιστα καὶ ἱεροπρεπέστατα τοῦ τε βασιλέως Ἀντίοχου καὶ <u>τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλίσσης Λαοδίκης</u>... [Honorary decree of Teos, c. 203 BC; Kotsidu 2000 no. 239 [E]; Ma 2000 no. 17. See also Ma 2000 no. 18]. Crowns with miniature portraits of Laodike to be worn by her chief-priestesses: ... καθίστασθαι ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς τόποις ἀρχιερείας, αἱ φ[ο]ρήσουσιν <u>στεφάνους χρυσοῦς</u> ἔχοντας εἰκόν[α]ς αὐτῆς ... [Edict of Antiochos III establishing state cult of Laodike III, 193 BC; multiple copies: Ma 2000 no. 37].³⁵
Eubolia	None
Laodike IV	Honorific statues of Laodike, along with Antiochos IV and their son Antiochos, dedicated by Hagemonidas, son of Zephyros: βασιλῇ Ἀντίοχον βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου καὶ βασιλίσσαν Λαοδίκαν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Ἀντίοχον Ἀγημονίδας Ζεφύρου ἀρε[τάς] ἐνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας τὰς εἰς αὐτόν. [Statue dedication, Dyme in Achaia, 160s (?) BC; <i>OGIS</i> 252; see also <i>SEG</i> 14.368, 17.207, 22.365, 25.475. Kotsidu 2000 does not appear to deal with this inscription].

It may also be safe to assume that where we have clear evidence for the cult of a queen, there would most likely be cult statues;³⁶ in this category, in addition to the above, we have evidence for the following:

Table 2

Apama	None
Stratonike	Cult among the Ionian cities during her lifetime: ... τοὺς συνέδρους τοῦ[ς] παρόντας ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων <u>[συ]ντελέσαι θυσίαν τοῖς θεοῖς πᾶσι καὶ πάσαις καὶ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν Ἀντιόχοι <καὶ Ἀντιόχοι> καὶ τῇ βασιλίσσῃ Στρατονίκῃ</u> ... [Decree of the Ionian League establishing festival in honour of the kings and queen, 268/262 BC; Kotsidu 2000 no. 198 and 199. Cf. also Kotsidu 2000 no. 238 [E] (cult at Teos?); <i>SEG</i> 41.1002]. Cult at Smyrna: ... τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ θεὸν Ἀντίοχον καὶ <u>τὴν μητέρα τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς θεὰν Στρατονίκην</u> ... [Decree of Smyrna honouring Seleukos II, c. 245–241 BC? Kotsidu 2000 no. 231 [E1]]. Cult of Aphrodite Stratonikis: ... τό τε ἱερὸν <u>τῆς Στρατονικίδος Ἀφροδίτης</u> ... [Decree of Smyrna honouring Seleukos II, c. 245–241 BC? Kotsidu 2000 no. 231 [E1]. For Aphrodite Stratonikis, see also Tacitus <i>Ann.</i> 3.63; <i>FD</i> III 4.153; and McCabe PHI IK Knidos I 231, Knidos 9, Smyrna 14, Smyrna 112, Smyrna 195, Smyrna 195*5, Smyrna 195*7]. Honorific statue on Delos (see above), perhaps a cult image (Kotsidu 2000: 197–98)?

³⁵ See van Nuffelen 2004.

³⁶ On the relationship between statue and cult, see Carney 2000, 28.

Laodike I	? Dedication by the people of Miletos to Laodike ? [ὁ δῆμος ὁ Μιλήσιων vacat [βασιλίσσῃ] Λαοδίῃ. [Inscription on architrave, 259/253 BC; Kotsidu 2000 no. 273 [E] (see also 273 [A]); the identification with Laodike I is not certain, nor is the interpretation that this inscription may imply some kind of cult honours]. ³⁷
Berenike Syra	None
Laodike II	None
Laodike III ³⁸	Cult-like honours (if not outright cult) ³⁹ at Sardis: ... τὸ ψήφισμα καθ' ὃ τέμενός τε Λαοδίκειον ἀνεῖναι ψηφίσαισθε καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρύσασθαι, ἄγειν δὲ καὶ πανήγυριν Λαοδίκειᾳ καθ' ἑκάστον ἔτος ... [Letter of Laodike III to the people of Sardis, 213 BC; Ameling 1995 no. 260 [E]; Kotsidu 2000 no. 233 [E]; Ma 2000 no. 2]. Some form of cult (?) at Sidon: [Βασιλεῖ Μεγάλῳ] [Ἀντιόχῳ καὶ βασιλίσσῃ] [Λαοδίῃ τῇ] [ἀδελφῇ] [αὐτοῦ καὶ Ἀ]ντιόχῳ τῷ [υἱῷ...] [Fragmented inscription perhaps recording a dedication to Antiochos III, Laodike III, and Antiochos the Son, 200–193 BC; Wachter 2005: Gr4]. Civic cult at Iasos, including an assimilation of Laodike to Aphrodite: ... [ἱερεῖαν] παρθένον βασιλίσσης Ἀφροδίτης Λαοδίῃς... ... ἔτι δὲ οἱ γαμούντες καὶ αἱ γαμούμεναί ἅμα μετὰ τὴν τῶν γάμων σύν]εργεῖν θνέτωσαν βασιλίσσῃ Λαοδίῃ ... [Honorary decree of Iasos for Antiochos III and Laodike III, 195/190 BC; Ameling 1995 no. 297 [E]; Kotsidu 2000 no. 283 [E], and cf. no. 285 [E]; Ma 2000 no. 26B]. Possibly divine honours at Herakleia by Latmos. [Wörle 1988; Ameling 1995 no. 296 [E]; Kotsidu 2000 no. 282 [E]; Ma 2000 no. 31]. Honorary decree of Teos (see above; c. 203 BC). Edict of Antiochos III establishing state cult of Laodike III, 193 BC (see above); multiple copies: Ma 2000 no. 37.
Eubolia	None
Laodike IV	None

It is tempting to speculate that a cult image of (e.g.) Aphrodite Stratonikis would actually resemble the queen, and thereby constitute a sort of royal portrait, but we have no way of knowing that this would be standard practice.⁴⁰ Moreover, as we saw, the line between royal and divine female portraiture is fuzzy, and both types would have been subjected to idealizing tendencies in any case; we will return to this below. It is likewise tempting to wonder whether the celebrated love story of Stratonike and Antiochos I might have prompted the romantic painters of antiquity to depict the tale, just as the European Neoclassical artists of the eighteenth and

37 See Ridgway 1987, 407–8.

38 For a summary, see Van Nuffelen 2004, 289–90.

39 See Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 206–207.

40 Laodike III is also assimilated to Aphrodite; cf. Kunst 2007, 35. On the question of such portraiture, cf. Brunelle 1976, 121. On Hellenistic queens' assimilation to Aphrodite, see Carney 2011 and Caneva 2013 and 2014.

nineteenth centuries did (Fig. 2).⁴¹ It has been argued that the famous painting known as the ‘Aldobrandini Wedding’ represented the marriage ceremony of Phila and Demetrios I Poliorketes; the story of their daughter’s lovesick stepson and the generosity of his father Seleukos would surely have been an even more inspiring topic.⁴² In his survey of famous paintings, Pliny the Elder does single out two paintings of Stratonike.⁴³ One of the paintings was evidently a rude burlesque (so presumably not a portrayal of the touching love story)⁴⁴ and Pliny does not expand on the nature of the other portrait. Still, it is noteworthy that Stratonike, apparently alone among Hellenistic queens, made it into his list. Nevertheless, these passages of Pliny are not of much help to our search for what might be termed ‘official’ portraits of Seleukid females.



Figure 2: *Antiochos and Stratonike*. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (c. 1840).
Musée Condé, Chantilly. Image Copyright: © Wikimedia Commons
(Photograph: Harry Brejat/RMN).

To return to the epigraphic evidence, its provenance raises further questions, this time about the cultural background of these material representations. With the numismatic evidence, we were on fairly safe ground in concluding that royal female portraits – or the lack thereof – corresponded to a centralized Seleukid royal ideology: some coinage in the empire was municipal, but the bulk of the coinage displaying queens was royal. But how ‘Seleukid’ are the epigraphically attested im-

41 The story of Seleukos I, Antiochos I, and Stratonike: App. Syr. 59–61; Lucian Syr. *D.* 17–18; Plut. *Demetr.* 38; Val. Max. 5.7 ext. 1. Modern paintings of the subject: Antonio Bellucci (1654–1726), Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), Jean Ingres (1780–1867), Alexandre Guillemot (1786–1831), and others.

42 Blanckenhagen and Green 1975. See Smith 1988, 9–10 on literary references to royal weddings; see also Ager ca. 2016b.

43 By Artemon (*HN* 35.139) and by Ktesikles (*HN* 35.140).

44 Cf., however, Engels and Erickson, in this volume.

ages of Seleukid women? One thing that immediately stands out in surveying the testimonia is the geographic distribution of these samples. The evidence almost without exception stems from Greek polities, and these images of the queens would have been erected on city and sanctuary territory, not in the ‘empire’ *per se*. We are not aware of any non-Greek evidence that speaks to queenly images. None of the Babylonian material, which does mention the Seleukid queens reasonably frequently, suggests anything about visual representations of those queens. While the Greek cities nestled in and among the territories of the Seleukid Empire no doubt felt they were conforming to royal desires by voting statues and establishing cults, the impulse still came from the cities themselves, as far as we can tell.⁴⁵ Indeed, of our examples listed above, the honours paid to Stratonike on Antigonid-friendly Delos and to Berenike Syra on Ptolemaic-friendly Samos seem to be completely divorced from these women’s role as queens in the *Seleukid* house.⁴⁶ In other words, the epigraphic evidence for images of royal women – unlike that of the second-century coinage featuring Laodike IV – says little about any dynastically-generated program of representing the royal women.

As noted in Table 1 above, the first queen of the Seleukid dynasty, Seleukos I’s wife Apama, was honoured with a statue dedicated by the Milesians at the sanctuary of Didyma.⁴⁷ While the inscription on the statue base is largely missing, comparison with the honorary inscription from Didyma, which specifically refers to the statue as an εἰκών, clearly demonstrates that the restoration of the statue base inscription – dedicator (nominative), honorand (accusative) and deity (dative) – is correct.⁴⁸ By the fourth century, the term εἰκών had replaced the Archaic σῆμα in statue dedications; its meaning is that of ‘likeness’ as opposed to ‘image’ and it specifically referred to a portrait statue.⁴⁹ While 299/8 BC is early in the portrait tradition for royal women in the Hellenic sphere, one need only think of such stat-

45 The possible dedication at Phoenician Sidon may be an exception to the overwhelmingly Greek evidence; no doubt here also it was considered politic to honour Antiochos III and his family, given his recent conquest of the territories in this region.

46 No reference is made to Stratonike’s marriage ties in the inscription from Delos, which Kotsidu dates to shortly after 300 BC (also Kunst 2007, 28), around the time when Stratonike married Seleukos I, while the multiple Delian dedicatory inscriptions tend to identify her as daughter of Demetrios and Phila; Stratonike’s daughter Phila, wife of Antigonos Gonatas, was also honoured with a statue on Delos (*JG* XI.4 1098). See also Wikander 2005, who dates the Delian dedication of Stratonike’s statue to c. 306 BC, before the marriage to Seleukos; cf. also Ramsey, in this volume, who argues that Stratonike’s presence on Delos represented her role in strengthening Seleukid-Antigonid ties. The Samian inscription identifies Berenike only as daughter of Ptolemy II; various scholars have assigned different dates to this inscription, including as late as 247/6–243/2 BC, after Berenike’s death. Tracy (1990, 66–7) and Kotsidu (2000 no. 178 [E]) argue that it must have considerably predated her marriage to Antiochos II. In any case it has no apparent Seleukid connection (and we do know that Ptolemaic women, at least, did not necessarily derive the title of *basilissa* from their husbands).

47 On Apama and Seleukos see Müller 2013b.

48 See Ma 2013, 24–30.

49 See Smith 2007, 88–94; Dillon 2010, 11–13.

ues as that of Olympias in the Philippeion at Olympia or the statue of Queen Artemisia II of Caria as possible precedents for such a dedication and image.⁵⁰

What might this statue of Apama have looked like? The contemporary statue of Aristonoë from Rhamnous may provide a parallel (Fig. 3).⁵¹ Both R. R. R. Smith and Sheila Dillon have shown that female portrait statues were more often than not identified by their dress and accompanying iconographic attributes rather than through clearly identifiable physiognomic traits, as were their male counterparts.⁵² As such, the majority of female portraiture, even royal portraits, has a largely 'generic' classical appearance that tends to assimilate the mass of female likenesses to those of the goddesses to whom they are often dedicated. And yet statues and contexts like that of Olympias in the Philippeion at Olympia clearly indicate that no cult was intended; one cannot therefore assume that the mere presence of a statue necessarily indicates the presence of cult (though we do believe that the presence of cult does imply the presence of a cult statue).⁵³

50 On the Argead portraits, see Carney 2000; 2007; 2010; Dillon 2007; Schultz 2007 and 2009. On the statue of Artemisia II, possibly carved by Skopas, see Waywell 1978, 70–2, 103–5; with other, associated honours, see Rusicka 1992, 42, 72–3; Kunst 2007.

51 On this statue see Dillon 2010, 15, 21, 76–7, 106–10. The statue is well preserved and, as a 'portrait' of the priestess Aristonoe from Rhamnous, is illustrative of the generic classical fourth-century features that dominate portraits of elite women in Greek society.

52 Smith 1988, 43, 48; Dillon 2007 and 2010, 104.

53 The Philippeion at Olympia was likely to have been a victory dedication or possibly a treasury; if the statues were not in fact chryselephantine (as argued by Schultz 2007), then Olympias' statue was probably not meant to indicate cult. See Townsend 2003, 93–4, 96 n. 14; Schultz 2007; *contra*, Carney 2000, but see also Carney 2007 and 2010. The building may have been a heröon, but even with Schultz's assertion concerning spatial and visual linkages with the altar of Zeus, the question remains as to how implicit or explicit this link was and what its meaning and intent (beyond simply aggrandizing Philip II and his family) may have been. See Schultz 2007, 232 n. 130; Caltabiano 1999, 201–2 with bibliography of earlier scholarship. Krumeich 2007, 168–9 notes that there was no altar associated with the Philippeion and so it is not likely to have had cult; Schultz 2009.



Figure 3: Statue of Aristonoë from Rhamnous.

National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Photograph: Craig Hardiman 2015, with the permission of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

With that *caveat*, it is to the epigraphic remains that we must look for corroborating evidence for cult statues. We have no physical remains or literary testimonia that discuss a cult statue to Stratonike, yet the inscriptions confirm that she received cult honours at various places and was assimilated to Aphrodite Stratonikis in Smyrna.⁵⁴ Though not definitive, this would likely suggest that a cult statue was erected at one or more of these places. Our evidence is most clear in the case of Laodike III. The honorary inscription from Teos states that statues of Antiochos III and Laodike III

⁵⁴ See also Engels and Erickson, in this volume.

were to be erected beside the statue of Dionysos. The term used in this instance is ἀγάλματα, a term that by the fourth century was used to denote cult statues. While the decree states that these statues were erected to celebrate Antiochos' benefices to Teos, it should be remembered that this was also the time when the famed temple to Dionysos at Teos, the largest temple to Dionysos in the ancient world, was erected by no less an architect than Hermogenes of Priene.⁵⁵ Given that these two statues were placed beside the cult statue of Dionysos in the temple, it is clear that they were meant not only to receive cult honours but also to help establish the dynasty's potential links to a divine heritage. Nonetheless, the statue of Laodike III herself was still likely to have been in the rather generic classical style.



Figure 4: Portrait of a Hellenistic Royal.
Archaeological Museum of Naples, Mus. inv. no. 5598.
Photograph: Sailko. © Wikimedia Commons.

Perhaps this type of generic classicism can best be seen in one of the most famous of all ancient portraits, one that has been identified by some as that of a Seleukid Queen, possibly Kleopatra Thea (Fig. 4). Given its general fame, it is important to reference this piece as indicative of the type, if not the specifics, of the material under consideration. Taken from the ruins of the Villa dei Papyri, this portrait was first discussed by Winckelmann, and has been studied and commented upon by art historians ever since. Not surprisingly, this intense interest has led to a host of attri-

55 Vit. *De arch.* 3.2–6, 7. *praef.* 12. See Mustafa Uz 1990; Webb 1996, 72–4.

butions, ranging from the generic ('a young woman' or 'a hero'), to the specific (the aforementioned Kleopatra Thea, the Roman Aulus Gabinius, Apollo, personifications of Africa and Libya, Isis, Kybele, Hathor, Arsinoë II, Berenike II, or any one of the Ptolemaic Kleopatras, I through VII).⁵⁶ Suffice to say that the very gender of the piece cannot be pinned down, let alone a specific identification. Importance was usually placed on the thick layer of corkscrew curls that fall down from the head, but it has been shown that these are later, possibly even modern, additions to the portrait. There are incised curls on the forehead that are contemporary, but it is the long corkscrew curls that are often used to identify the portrait as Kleopatra Thea.⁵⁷ Yet such hair is also found on some images of Apollo and the style is, of course, often referred to as 'Isis Locks', given its appearance in depictions of the goddess.

The overall fleshiness of the Papyri image, along with its somewhat generic quality, certainly suggests a female rather than a male portrait and Carol Mattusch's work on the sculptural collection(s) of the Villa dei Papyri suggests that it is a Ptolemaic princess – and a noted one at that.⁵⁸ The collection of portraits at the Villa, with its suggestion of everything from a specific philosophical to a generic 'gymnasium' grouping, is likely to have represented a hodgepodge of heterogeneous pieces collected for their associations to known individuals or famous pieces of art. As such, the head in question is more likely to be that of a Ptolemaic queen or princess rather than one of Kleopatra Thea.⁵⁹

While we are well aware that there are many pitfalls in an argument that seeks to demonstrate that a thing did not exist, rather than that it did, we do believe that the available evidence from the Seleukid Empire suggests that queenly portraits did not form any part of the official royal program until the early second century BC. It now remains to examine the possible reasons for Seleukid practice in this regard.

56 For the attribution to Gabinius (*cos.* 58), see Camparetti and De Petra 1883, 266; for the Kleopatra attributions, see Kyrieleis 1975, 120, 128; Smith 1988, 160, no. 24. The other attributions rest largely on how one wishes to interpret the so-called Isis locks present on the figure. On these issues and a general bibliography on attributions based largely on the hair, see Mattusch 2005, 230–3.

57 Thea appears with 'Isis locks' in some of her coin portraiture.

58 Mattusch 2005, 232–3.

59 There is room to doubt that in the Julio-Claudian period, when the sculptural collection was amassed, the Seleukid queen would have been famous enough to warrant inclusion among the other portraits. Among the intellectuals of the day it may have been a different story since Diodoros, Livy, and apparently Trogus all wrote about Kleopatra Thea (Diod. 32.9c, 33.28; Livy *Per.* 60; Justin 39.1–2). Still, it seems likely that Seleukid royal women would have paled in comparison to the general fame of Ptolemaic queens in post-civil war Rome. For the thematic nature of such collections, see Pandermalis 1971; Wojcik 1986, 192–201; Conticello 1989; Neudecker 1998; Mattusch 2005, 12–23.

II. PRECEDENTS AND PROTOTYPES

One avenue of approach to early Hellenistic practices of any kind is to consider their potential links to pre-existing local customs. What influence might native Asian traditions have had on the Seleukids? Honorific statues were largely a Greek custom, as we have seen, but the portrait-crowns for Laodike III may have had Asian origins (cf. Fig. 5).⁶⁰ The edict of Antiochos III establishing the details of Laodike's state cult – including these crowns to be worn by her priestesses – is the only example among the epigraphic evidence we have collected that does not stem from a Greek polity, and indeed the various inscriptions recording it come from the interior of the empire rather than from its Greek fringe.⁶¹



Figure 5: Bronze Portrait Crown.

Altes Museum, Berlin, Photo: Misc 8169, by Norbert Franken.

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– Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

- 60 Miniature portraits of Laodike III ('presumably a cameo or high relief in precious metal' [Smith 1988, 12; but see also Plantzos 1996, 118 and 1999, 55]) to be inset in gold crowns worn by the chief-priestesses of her state cult. Crowns with portraits of deities (Kybele, Attis, Serapis) survive in museums in Berlin and Cairo; these partial portraits are sculpted in the round. See Robert 1930 and 1949; Smith 1988, 12; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 202–6; Rumscheid 2000, 9, 61.
- 61 See Robert 1930 and 1949; Iossif and Lorber 2007, 63–4. The inscription from Sidon (above, note 45) is Greek in language and concept, and does not represent a distinct Asian perspective.

As for the Persians specifically, there is very little in the way of royal female images that survives in the Achaimenid record, although Maria Brosius argues in favour of a considerable degree of visibility of royal Persian women.⁶² While not denying the possibility of a very real visible presence of queens in Persian society, we do find Brosius' arguments strained: for one thing, we believe she too readily supposes the existence of Achaimenid female portraiture on the basis of a few Asian – but non-Persian – examples that range widely in time and space. Furthermore, her approach seems overly driven by her desire to demonstrate that the lack of extant images of royal Achaimenid women does not equate to a low status for those women. We are in agreement – as we have already pointed out – that invisibility in the material record does not necessarily equate to social invisibility. But that should not justify us in assuming, on the other hand, that social visibility naturally equates to a substantial presence in the material record.

One area where native Achaimenid practice may have resulted in at least some portraiture of Seleukid women is that of miniature representations on seals, rather than large-scale public sculpture: 'Seals dated to the Achaimenid period show audience scenes in which high-ranking women receive a female visitor.'⁶³ Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones draws attention to Herodotos' comment that seals were in common use throughout the Persian Empire.⁶⁴ He deals with a substantial set of Greco-Persian seals from the fifth and fourth centuries BC featuring images of women; these seals stem from Anatolia and, given the heavy Greek influence, do not support a view that Achaimenid Persia typically employed female portraiture extensively in its sigillography.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, some of them at any rate may have been intended to portray royal or at least elite women, perhaps from satrapal courts in Asia Minor: 'Females seated on a variety of low stools or chairs are common; some wear crowns, diadems, or tiaras, perhaps indicating a noble status.'⁶⁶ They cannot, however, be identified with any particular women.

In the context of an examination of Seleukid female portraits, it is relevant here to note the clay sealings, from various places in the Seleukid Empire, which demonstrate that at least some seals seem to have borne the portrait of a Seleukid queen.⁶⁷ The earliest example of which we are aware is a sealing that McDowell identified as possibly a portrait of a wife of Seleukos III; however, such an identification seems quite unlikely.⁶⁸ Iossif and Lorber provide a detailed examination of the imprints of two seals which may have borne likenesses of Laodike III and her

62 Brosius 1996, 84–7, citing (for example) a gold statue of his wife Artystone commissioned by Darius I (Hdt. 7.69.2). Amestris, daughter of Darius III's brother Oxyathres, and wife in succession of Alexander's generals Krateros and Lysimachos, issued coinage under her own name (*AMASTRIOS BASILISSES*) that may have borne her image: Mørkholm 1991, 95–6; Brosius 1996, 18; Erciyas 2006, 33–4.

63 Brosius 2007, 33.

64 Llewellyn-Jones 2010a, 165 and 2010b, 178; Hdt. 1.195 (on the Babylonians specifically).

65 Llewellyn-Jones 2010a, 168 and 2010b, 183 remarks on the contrast between these Anatolian seals and the 'paucity of images [of women] we have from the Iranian heartland.'

66 Llewellyn-Jones 2010a, 168.

67 Rostovtzeff 1932, nos. 15 and 71; McDowell 1935, 199–208; Plantzos 1999, 30–1.

68 McDowell 1935, 71. We have no literary evidence for a wife (or children) of Seleukos III, and

daughter (and priestess) Laodike IV.⁶⁹ In both cases, the Laodike in question occupies the posterior position behind a male profile in a jugate portrait, a style familiar from Ptolemaic coinage of the third century BC, but apparently not yet in use on Seleukid coins. The portraits are recognizably individualized, and so may be more comparable to numismatic conventions than to those of traditional sculpted images. The identification of the first portrait as Laodike III is based primarily on the date of the stamp (215/4 BC), while the second portrait's 'remarkable' similarities to the profile of Laodike IV on the coinage discussed earlier confirmed for Iossif and Lorber that the same woman was portrayed on the seal.

Seals would of course be used on official documents, and so could attain a sort of semi-public stature. But the seals themselves were for the exclusive use of the individual who employed them, and the documents that bore their imprint were routinely archived and hidden away from public view (in repositories where the sealings have been found). In terms of distribution and function, then, seal portraits, while they might look like coin portraits, do not provide the same weight of evidence as the numismatic record for the dissemination of royal images. As for the possibility that the Seleukids at least to some extent followed Achaimenid precedents in their early years, it certainly seems that the material invisibility of Seleukid women was a match for the invisibility of Achaimenid women in the material record.⁷⁰

When it comes to precedents and/or comparisons for public Hellenistic royal female portraiture, the very large elephant in the room (at least so far in this discussion) is of course Ptolemaic Egypt.⁷¹ We have to acknowledge that it was probably the Ptolemies, with their clear emphasis on the female members of the dynastic line, who were outstanding and unusual, rather than the Seleukids; this speaks again to the necessity for a more thorough examination of the epigraphic evidence from the other kingdoms. It also raises the methodological question of whether, even with such evidence, we are trying to compare apples and oranges (or rather, dates and melons). We have numerous Greek inscriptions (and Greek habits of honorific stat-

McDowell's reference here to 'the youthful king Antiochos, son of Seleukos III' suggests that there must be some error in his identification.

- 69 Iossif and Lorber 2007, 65–7 (citing Invernizzi 2004, 42, Se 26–28); the evidence for the seals comes from the surviving clay seal impressions. The impressions are date-stamped to 215/4 BC (Laodike III) and 207/6 BC (Laodike IV); the portrait of Laodike III – since we have no surviving identifiable portraits of her – can only be conjecturally identified because of its date. Iossif and Lorber also identify a seal impression from Orchoi as a portrait of Laodike III in old age (76) (citing Lindström 2003, 32, pl. 277 – I).
- 70 On the 'complete absence of the human female form in the official palace art of the Empire', see Llewellyn-Jones 2013, 104.
- 71 See Brunelle 1976; Smith 1988; Walker and Higgs 2001. Plantzos 1999, 62–3 points out that in the area of carved gem portraits, the Ptolemaic evidence also outweighs any from the other kingdoms; see Plantzos 1996, 122 for a discussion of the putatively official Ptolemaic program of gem portraits. While a few gems carved with portraits of Seleukid rulers feature in Plantzos' catalogue, there are no gems with recognizable Seleukid females (of course, the same problem with identification goes back to the lack of numismatic images). Kunst's 2007 article on the cults of Hellenistic queens also demonstrates the preponderance of evidence from Ptolemaic Egypt.

ues) from the Seleukid Empire because of all the Greek polities located in its sphere. We do not have such inscriptions from the Ptolemaic kingdom, because of its quite different political and ethnic structure.⁷² We do, however, have a great deal of Egyptian temple sculpture and epigraphy because of the unique religious background of Egypt, evidence of a type lacking in the Seleukid realm.

How much, then, of the apparent distinction between the Ptolemies and the early Seleukids – when it comes to the valuation and portrayal of royal women – is the result of differing types of evidence? How much is owing to distinctly dissimilar political geographies? How much springs from divergent notions of monarchy? How do we create any kind of statistical comparator that would make sense? It is certainly true that pre-Hellenistic Egyptian tradition – unlike Persian tradition – did feature extensive images of royal women, frequently engaged in ritual and often assimilated to goddesses.⁷³ Nevertheless, we should note that there is nothing distinctly Egyptian that would account for the early *numismatic* focus on Ptolemaic women (or for that matter the numerous surviving Greek-style portraits of Ptolemaic queens), as opposed to the sculpted portraits of queens on temple walls like generations of Egyptian royal women before them.

The imagery for Ptolemaic royal women is well known and well established. From the very outset, images of these women were intended to establish a visual identity that would parallel that of their ruler-husbands and present them as constructed entities that could serve multiple religious, cultural, and political objectives. This is seen most clearly in the numerous images of Ptolemaic royals assimilated to deities that served as objects of cult worship. While the earliest evidence for state cult among the Seleukids is that of Laodike III in the early second century, the evidence for such activities among the Ptolemies goes back to the early third century. Portraits of queens in the guise of native Egyptian goddesses like Isis and syncretized iconographically with Hellenic deities like Tyche firmly established these women in the visual language of Ptolemaic rule.⁷⁴ This strategy operated both at home and abroad: witness the *temenos* of Agathe Tyche on Delos, probably an extended version of the cult of Arsinoë II.⁷⁵

Moving away from the emphasis on the Ptolemaic example, we may turn to Pergamon as an instructive parallel with regard to the question of women in the

72 We do of course have numerous inscriptions from the old Greek *poleis* that were at times within the Ptolemaic sphere of influence, such as those from (for example) the Aegean island of Thera; these inscriptions reflect the customary pattern of honours (human or divine) for Ptolemaic rulers (male and female).

73 Robins 1993, 21–5, 40–1.

74 See Burr-Thompson 1973; Smith 1994, 88–93; Stanwick 2002.

75 Bruneau 1970, 411–2; Burr-Thompson 1973, 83. The establishment of the Stratonikeia games on Delos in 253 BC was probably a recognition of Stratonikeia's numerous benefactions to Apollo, and not necessarily an indication of active cult reception on the island in the same way as the Agathe Tyche *temenos* is likely to have represented cult of Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II on the island. On the Stratonikeia, see Bruneau 1970, 558–63. Bagnall 1976, 155 n. 141 notes Bruneau's observations that, in general, it seems that the Delians would stop their private ruler cults when the political moment or necessity had passed and that they tended to avoid 'official' royal cults. See Bruneau 1970, 516–80.

public visual language of rulers. Apollonis of Pergamon was honoured in the early to mid-second century with a temple to her worship (in Kyzikos and possibly Pergamon) on the part of her devoted sons.⁷⁶ Her inscription associated with the Great Altar of Zeus has led some to see even that monument as something of a heroön in her honour.⁷⁷ It is true that there are very few surviving images of Pergamene queens, but this is hardly surprising when one considers that the number of Pergamene queens was very small. The epigraphic record certainly demonstrates that Pergamon was not at all averse to public female portraiture: high-ranking women – priestesses of Athena Nikephoros – would regularly receive the public honour of having a bronze statue erected by the *demos* in the precinct of Athena.⁷⁸ It is likely that Attalid queens too could have been honoured in such a fashion, particularly when we consider the remarks of Polybios and Plutarch on the devotion inspired by Apollonis.⁷⁹

Perhaps then, as R. R. R. Smith suggests, a harmonious, family-oriented visual representation such as we see among the Ptolemies, and perhaps also the Attalids, was simply not a major concern on the part of the early Seleukids.⁸⁰ Few indeed, as we noted above, are the images of Seleukid male rulers, aside from coinage, and even there the emphasis is on heroic looking individuals, men of action, with epithets such as Soter, Theos, and Kallinikos.⁸¹ What role do queens play in the visual language of saviour-victor kings always at war? It is only with the reign of Antiochos III that we begin to see a shift in Seleukid self-presentation, a shift that may correspond to particular pressures and concerns that resulted in the Seleukids adopting new models for their royal image.

III. NEW MODELS

We have seen that nothing could be more different than Ptolemaic and Seleukid practice in the portrayal of royal women in the first century and a half of the Hellenistic age. When the Ptolemaic princess Berenike Syra left Egypt in 253/2 BC to marry the Seleukid ruler Antiochos II, there would already have been in circulation – and she no doubt would have seen – the splendid issues of Ptolemaic coinage featuring both solo and jugate portraits of her stepmother and aunt, Arsinoë II (Fig.

76 On her apotheosis and cultic honours, see *OGIS* 338, 309. On the temple of Apollonis at Kyzikos, see *Anth. Pal.* 3.1–18; Demoen 1988; Stupperich 1990. The *Suda* (s. v. Ἀπολλωνιάς λιμνὴ) mentions that her son Attalos II buried her in a shrine and named a lake after her. This shrine may refer to the Altar of Zeus, an apsidal structure beneath it, or Jigma Tepe, on which see Hansen 1971, 45, 100, 289, 455–7; Allen 1983, 151 n. 27; Hoepfner 1990, 282; Fehr 1997, 55; Stewart 2000, 36. On possible portraits, see Queyrel 2003, 263–9. Van Looy 1976.

77 Fehr 1997; Ridgway 2000, 22–3; Green 2000, 177–9; Stewart 2000, 34–9.

78 See Van Bremen 1996, 66; Connelly 2007, 140–1; Dillon 2010, 38–41 with references.

79 Polyb. 22.20; Plut. *Mor.* 480b–d.

80 See Smith 1991, 223–37.

81 In the numismatic record, portraits of individual Seleukid male rulers are actually more evident than are their Ptolemaic counterparts; throughout the period of their dynasty, the Ptolemies tended to favour repeated portraits of Ptolemy I on their coinage.

6).⁸² She therefore had a precedent and a model for royal female portraiture (and for jugate portraiture) on coinage. Yet we see no sign that Berenike minted coinage with her own – or with her own and her son's – portrait in those desperate days after the death of her Seleukid husband, when she was trying to assert her child's right to his father's throne. Granted, those days were not long. But it has been suggested that Berenike did in fact issue a special run of coins in 246 BC: the so-called 'Soter coinage', which featured portraits not of Berenike and her young son, nor of Berenike's husband Antiochos II, but rather of his father, Antiochos I Soter, with the legend ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ANTIOXOY.⁸³ The reverse of the bronze coins in this series also carried images of the Seleukid anchor between the caps of the Dioskouroi, the latter iconography especially associated with Ptolemaic queens. If the Soter coinage was indeed issued by Berenike, then her choice of portraits, when she could have followed a Ptolemaic precedent of female portraiture – and perhaps even created her own precedent of pairing royal mother and son – may indeed say something about the general atmosphere of the Seleukid kingdom regarding the material representation of royal women.⁸⁴



Figure 6: *Jugate Coin Portraits of Ptolemy II & Arsinoë II and Ptolemy I & Berenike I.* Gold Octadrachm, issued under Ptolemy III, Alexandria, 27.69 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Osnabrück, Auction 226, lot 648. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.

- 82 Mørkholm 1991, 102–3, nos. 294–8; although many of the jugate coins were minted under Ptolemy III, Mørkholm notes that the series began in the 260s BC. The marriage of Berenike and Antiochos may have been celebrated with a special issue of gold coinage at Antioch, but these coins featured only Antiochos' portrait (SC I 200 and no. 570.2).
- 83 See SC I 225–8 and nos. 640–2 (gold, silver, and bronze). Houghton et al. also acknowledge that the Soter coinage may have been issued by Seleukid loyalists (i.e., the anti-Ptolemaic camp) eager to assert the rights of the purely Seleukid line in the struggle. See Le Rider 2000.
- 84 The pairing of a maternal regent and under-age king on coins is not seen until Kleopatra I and Ptolemy VI in the Ptolemaic house (obverse and reverse), and Laodike IV and Antiochos the son of Seleukos IV in the Seleukid house (jugate). If Berenike was responsible for the Soter coinage (which is far from certain), her choice may have been purely pragmatic: this was no doubt a time to advertise her son's link to his Seleukid grandfather rather than to his foreign maternal ancestry. For an alternative interpretation of Berenike's situation, see Coşkun, in this volume.

It may be that the Ptolemaic numismatic example was deliberately and consciously rejected by generations of Seleukid rulers anxious to advertise their own rhetoric of monarchy against the rival and often hostile kingdom next door. That rhetoric was perhaps intended to emphasize Macedonian warrior masculinity and to stand in opposition to the Ptolemaic emphasis on queens and the values they symbolized, values which others in a patriarchal world might deride as effeminate.⁸⁵ Internally, pre-Seleukid artistic models were overwhelmingly masculine: in spite of the existence of the scattered female images reviewed in this paper, the dominant – and monumental – Persian imagery was that of king, nobles, warriors, and subjects, as depicted at Persepolis, at Susa, at Bisitun.

With the rather sudden collapse of Ptolemaic power at the end of the third century, and the simultaneous surge in Seleukid fortunes under Antiochos III, it may have seemed that Ptolemaic models and connections were no longer a threat, and perhaps even had something to offer. At any rate, Antiochos arranged the first certain sibling marriage within the Seleukid kingdom, between his daughter Laodike and his son Antiochos; he also married his daughter Kleopatra I to the young Ptolemy V, the first Ptolemaic-Seleukid marriage since Antiochos II and Berenike Syra. Antiochos III was also the first to mandate a state cult for his queen.⁸⁶

After the death of Antiochos the Great, with Roman interference in the dynastic succession through the genteel imprisonment of such potential heirs as Antiochos IV and Demetrios I – and perhaps with the singularly important position that Laodike IV held within her family – the Seleukids might have been still more prepared to try different Ptolemaic models. It has been suggested that the abrupt visual emphasis on Laodike IV should be linked to the stumbling of the Seleukid kingdom in the wake of Antiochos III's defeat at Magnesia and his humiliation at Apameia.⁸⁷ Arguably the elephant head on the reverse of the coinage featuring Laodike struck by Seleukos IV, and after him Antiochos IV, references the continuing might of the Seleukid Empire. There seems to be no particular reason why the elephant should have been paired with a portrait of the queen rather than the king, and it should probably be reiterated that the identification of Laodike here has been made on art historical grounds (that is, there are no legends to confirm it).⁸⁸ Yet perhaps the very

85 The love story of Stratonike – clearly approved and disseminated officially – might seem to be an exception to this rule, but it does not seem to have damaged Antiochos I's military reputation; indeed, with the creation of the cult of Aphrodite Stratonikis, it may only have enhanced it.

86 Ma also points out (2000, 218, 321) that the epigraphic language of Antiochos III and Laodike III and their supporters emphasizes the solidarity and love within the royal family, a characteristic more commonly associated with the Ptolemies. Antiochos III seems to have had a genuine faith in his wife, leaving her to act as his delegate while he was on campaign in the Aegean in the 190s (Strootman 2011, 79–80; for a more nuanced discussion of Laodike's role during Antiochos's absences, see Widmer 2008, 70–75).

87 See Le Rider 1986; Ogden 1999, 141–2; Hoover 2002; et al. (Hoover argues that stylistically the numismatic portraits of Laodike IV already show Ptolemaic influence).

88 See Hoover 2002; the identification is nevertheless widely accepted. See SC II 4: 'There is no obvious thematic relation between Laodike IV, or indeed any veiled female, and this distinctly martial type'.

oddity of the pairing of the queen and the elephant, that beleaguered emblem of Seleukid military might, emphasizes the symbolic importance of the woman. Royal women were linked to military victory in other contexts, and the subsequent coinage of Antiochos IV featuring the new goddess (Aphrodite) Nikephoros – perhaps an avatar of his mother Laodike III or his wife Laodike IV – underscores such a link.⁸⁹

A compelling reason for Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV to feature their sister-wife Laodike IV on their coinage – with or without overt military references – was that she was a symbol of dynastic continuity, much as Ptolemaic women came to be. If Laodike did indeed marry all three of her brothers in succession, then she clearly acted as a dynastic lynch-pin, providing stability at a time when the Seleukid dynasty was once again facing potential collateral strife between the rival descendants of Antiochos III. Antiochos IV in particular – long held hostage in Rome – would have appreciated the advantages inherent in marrying the existing queen and emphasizing their familial closeness.⁹⁰

If the gold octadrachms issued at Antioch featuring Laodike IV and her son (Fig. 1) are to be interpreted as a regency coinage, then it may well be, as the authors of *Seleucid Coins* suggest, that this was ‘necessitated by the need to purchase support for the queen’s regency, in the form of a lavish accession donative in the name of the child king.’⁹¹ We cannot know whether the design of this issue and the prominence given to Laodike owed more to the minister Heliodoros, the murderer of Seleukos IV and now ‘the power behind the throne’,⁹² or to Laodike herself. The coinage was issued in 175 BC, just a few years after Laodike’s full sister, Kleopatra I, would have begun to issue her own regency coinage in Egypt. The styles of the Ptolemaic and Seleukid regency coinage differ, however: Kleopatra I and her son Ptolemy VI appear on obverse and reverse of the coins, while Laodike appears jugate with her son. Indeed, the jugate coinage of Laodike and the young Antiochos is the first in any of the Hellenistic kingdoms to feature the female partner in the foreground, a point that has perhaps been overshadowed by the common emphasis on the later coinage featuring Kleopatra Thea and her son Antiochos VIII.⁹³ Marion Meyer also argues that the draping of the veil – much further back than what we see on veiled Ptolemaic female portraits – emphasizes the diadem, and therefore, presumably, the authority of the queen.⁹⁴ On the other hand, the Seleukid regency

89 On Nikephoros: Iossif and Lorber 2007. On royal women as symbolic of military victory: Ager ca. 2016b. The other possibility is that the bottle-cap coinage is simply killing two birds with one stone (dynastic continuity + military might), and the pairing of the queen and the elephant is purely incidental.

90 Demetrios I, also a hostage in Rome, would have had similar motivations for marrying Laodike V (assuming that she was indeed his sister).

91 SC II 37.

92 App. Syr 45; SC II 37.

93 Dodd 2009 (204) is mistaken in claiming that the male figure occupies the anterior position (she cites Le Rider 1999, 187 = *Antioche de Syrie sous les Seleucides I*).

94 Meyer 1992/3, 109–10, 124. Houghton et al. point out that this manner of wearing the veil is regionally-based (north Syrian; SC II 35), but that does not necessarily obviate the symbolic impact of the visible diadem.

coinage (unlike the Ptolemaic regency coinage) names only the king, so we should be cautious about viewing it as a signifier of an assertion of independent queenly power. Moreover, the fact that Kleopatra II and Kleopatra III, two of the most independently active of the Ptolemaic queens, left behind no coin portraits and no securely recognized sculpted portraits should caution us against making too simplistic a link between power and visual representation in any case.

Our caveat on invisibility should therefore be reiterated: a lack of physical presence (in the material record) does not mean a lack of public presence.⁹⁵ There is little doubt that Seleukid queens were seen on numerous royal occasions and the epigraphic record attests to numerous dedications honouring them at sanctuaries throughout their territory. Yet their situation was not the same as that of their Ptolemaic counterparts. It seems likely that the need to reinforce strong family connections, dynastic successions, and the legitimacy of incestuous marriage, coupled with the millennia-old tradition of public images of Pharaonic queens throughout Upper and Lower Egypt, would have presented a unique set of cultural circumstances that would make the distribution of royal queen portraits throughout Ptolemaic Egypt thoroughly desirable and acceptable. There was no such need or tradition in the Seleukid east. Even the general lack of non-royal portrait statues in the Seleukid Empire is noteworthy. Those few Hellenistic statues (or even purported Roman copies) that have been recovered from Antioch are for the most part private in nature, erected inside a person's own home, or of a generic locative quality, such as the statues of the Muses in the theatre. Public honorific statues of a type found in most of the great Hellenistic capitals just seem to be missing from the material record in Antioch.

95 Cf. Ramsey, in this volume.



Figure 7: Jugate Coin of Kleopatra Thea and Alexander Balas.

Tetradrachm, Ake-Ptolemais; 15.53 g. Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 160, lot 287:

Kleopatra Thea & Antiochos Balas. © With permission by Dr. Hubert Lanz.

Cf. also Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008, SC II no. 1841, 1843–6, 1860–1.

A few words on the later Seleukids may serve to provide additional perspective to this discussion, and perhaps bring it full circle. After Laodike IV and Laodike V, all Seleukid queens of whom we have knowledge were Ptolemaic in origin. We might expect, therefore, to see an enhanced Ptolemaic program in the coinage, that is, an even greater emphasis on queens in the royal ideology as expressed in the material record. And at first glance we do, especially with the multiple portraits of Kleopatra Thea. In the jugate coins of Kleopatra Thea and Alexander Balas the image is so clearly Egyptian and Ptolemaic that its message could not have been lost on the peoples of the Seleukid Empire (Fig. 7).⁹⁶ The overall style is in line with similar jugate imagery going back to the Philadelphoi, Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II. Thea bears the *kalathos* and the cornucopia, both attributes that associate her with the pre-eminent Egyptian deities of Serapis and Isis. The fact that she is also in front of the king leaves no one to wonder who is in charge – or at least who is backing the new royals. Family and harmony are now stressed, as is the clear link to the Ptolemies of Egypt. Even Thea's solo coinage, perhaps celebrating a period of sole rule after the death of her erstwhile husband, Demetrios II, shows her not only with the royal diadem but also with the 'Isis Locks', a feature assimilating her to the goddess and reinforcing her Egyptian parentage and erstwhile Ptolemaic patronage (Fig. 8).⁹⁷

⁹⁶ SC II nos. 1841, 1843–6, 1860–1.

⁹⁷ SC II 465–7, no. 2258.



Figure 8: Coin of Kleopatra Thea.

Tetradrachm, Ake-Ptolemais; 187 SE = 126/5 BC; 16.57 g. Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 158, lot 324: Kleopatra Theas Alleinregierung. © With permission by Dr. Hubert Lanz.

But in truth, Kleopatra Thea, rather than representing the beginning of a trend, seems to be – perhaps like Laodike IV – a singularity. She seems also to have been largely responsible for her own appearance on the coinage, so her vivid presence says little about any possible changes in Seleukid ideology.⁹⁸ We know of no coin portraits of her nieces and successors, Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV, the wives of Antiochos VIII and Antiochos IX respectively. The only other late Seleukid queen to be found on coinage is Kleopatra Selene, who appears briefly in the now traditional jugate fashion as regent with her son Antiochos XIII.

Tryphaina, so reviled in the literary sources for allegedly instigating the murder of her sister Kleopatra IV, was perhaps in fact a ‘good’ queen from a Seleukid perspective: loyal to the interests of her one and only husband, she gave him multiple children, including five sons who (however briefly) ruled as kings.⁹⁹ If the Seleukids had really absorbed a Ptolemaic-style outlook on the royal women, we might expect that Tryphaina would have been a good candidate to be featured in coinage alongside her husband – and yet there is no sign of her. Perhaps the circumstances of the time militated against it: the Seleukid realm had shrunk very considerably by now, and Antiochos VIII was bedevilled by the rival ambitions of his half-brother Antiochos IX. This argument, however, can be turned on its head: the difficulties of such times might also have called for the advertisement of a strong dynasty based solely on the family of Antiochos VIII, his wife Tryphaina, and their sons.¹⁰⁰ It seems, then, that we should exercise caution in seeing the numismatic presence of

⁹⁸ Cf. Dodd 2009, 199 and 206–11.

⁹⁹ Ager ca. 2016b. For a discussion of Justin’s account of Tryphaina, see Bartlett, in this volume.

¹⁰⁰ Of course Antiochos VIII, after his co-rule with his domineering mother Kleopatra Thea, may simply have been gun-shy about elevating another woman to the same position.

Laodike IV and, after her, of Kleopatra Thea as indicative of truly new or long-lasting trends in the Seleukid tradition – or non-tradition – of female portraiture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

So what are we to make of all these ‘invisible’ Seleukid women? It is unfortunate that in her book, *The Female Portrait Statue in the Greek World*, Sheila Dillon does not address portraits of royal females. This is understandable, given the scope of her work, but we still feel that many of her conclusions and certainly interpretive strategies can be used when thinking about (if not directly analyzing) royal portraits. While queens and princesses formed a special category and, to an extent, broke or formed their own social rules within their state, they were still women, and any grand transgressions from socially normative practices would have to have been explained through another socially determined practice such as deification. So while Dillon is correct to note both the general lack of royal female portraiture outside of Egypt and the fact that the civic elite did not model their images on the royal elite, we do think that both, in their own way, were still constructed within the same social fabric.

One can see this, for example, in the inscription on the base from Didyma honouring Apama: it uses the same formula as non-royal elite inscriptional dedications. As such, it seems quite likely that the mass of royal female portraits was also similar in form: that the faces were all rather generic and classical, and it was in the dress that one expressed a sense of individuality: lavish, at times semi-transparent, silk mantles for elites and iconographic attributes for royals. As an illustration of this point, we might look at a statue like the ‘Eurydike’ (mother of Phillip II) from the sanctuary of Eukleia in Vergina. Is this Eukleia, Eurydike, or is it Eurydike as a priestess and so a certain amalgamation of the two? All three have been proposed and illustrate the problems of dealing with free-standing female portraits.¹⁰¹ Their similarities can defy specific identifications and this very trait seems to have been part of the overall ‘socially normative’ meaning of public female statues.

For the most part even royal portraits were constructed to conform to socially determined ideas of female modesty and beauty and so, without major identifying physiognomic traits, are difficult to assess at the best of times, even when one has coin issues to use as a base comparison.¹⁰² So with a sculptural category (female portrait statues) that is small in number to begin with, then an even smaller sub-set

101 See Dillon 2010, 79, ill. 33. The inscription on the associated base reads only ‘Eurydike dedicated the statue to Eukleia’ and is of little help. To us, the ‘portrait-like’ features often discussed seem rather generic and so a key to identification might be the divine-like peplos she wears. See Shultz 2007, 216–7, 230 n. 65; Dillon 2010, 78–80; Carney 2010, 45–6 with references. There is a peplophoros statue from Pergamon similar to the Eurydike that has been identified as a portrait of Queen Apollonis. See Smith 1988, 81, 89 n. 24, 160–1, cat. 29; Queyrel 2003, 264–7, cat H1; Dillon 2010, 80–1.

102 Some exceptions to this general classicizing trend exist, such as the ‘Vienna Queen’ and the Louvre Kleopatra, both identified as possibly Ptolemaic queens, perhaps Kleopatra II or Kleopatra III; Smith 1988, cat. 74, pl. 48, 1–2; cat. 56, pl. 38, 3–4.

(royal women) that can often be confused with deities or priestesses based on generic 'classical' styles, and that is too often reliant on fragmentary or obtusely inscribed statue bases for identification, we can conjecture that even had there been a large number of Seleukid queenly portraits they might have been 'invisible' among the mass of similar looking material. Still, even with this mass of generic portraits we can often identify Ptolemaic royal women based on iconography peculiar to their Greco-Egyptian context: Isis locks, the horns of Hathor, and so on. The fact that we have no portraits that use a specific Seleukid iconographic language, beyond generic royal attributes such as a diadem or a cornucopia, may suggest that the Seleukids had preoccupations other than erecting portrait statues of their queens throughout the Hellenistic world.

As for the coinage, the dearth of portrait images throughout the third century leads us to a similar sense of feminine invisibility in the Seleukid numismatic record. The first reasonably identifiable coin portrait of a Seleukid queen does not appear until the reign of Seleukos IV. The earlier generations of Seleukid rulers clearly chose not to depict their consorts in this most widespread of visual media. By the second century BC, however, Ptolemaic models had begun to creep into the Seleukid visual matrix.¹⁰³ The Ptolemaic influence swells to striking proportions under Kleopatra Thea, and she certainly stands at the head of a new custom of Seleukid men preferring Ptolemaic brides. Nevertheless, in terms of a Seleukid adoption of the Ptolemaic visual language, Thea's legacy was not an enduring one: the coinage of later Seleukid rulers indicates that their preoccupation with a male-dominated visual propaganda reasserted itself and was rarely challenged by royal females. The Ptolemaic model may have been too rooted in the peculiarity of Ptolemaic circumstances for it to have succeeded over the long term in a kingdom with a very different construction of royalty. Perhaps the issue, then, is not one of invisible Seleukid women after all, but rather, curiously visible Ptolemaic ones.

103 See note 87 above on the Ptolemaic characteristics of Laodike IV's image. The Seleukids themselves no doubt played a role in disseminating such models further east to the kingdom of Baktria, which also featured jugate male and female images on its coinage (cf. Wenghofer and Houle, in this volume).

III. DYNASTIC INTERMARRIAGE AND HELLENISTIC QUEENSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF THE SELEUKIDS

PRINCESS & TIGRESS: APAMA OF KYRENE

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ABSTRACT

A daughter of Antiochos I, Apama was married in an alliance that confirmed both Kyrene's defection from the Ptolemaic to the Seleukid banner, and the claim to kingship of her husband Magas. Thereafter, she falls into obscurity until the latter's death in 250, when she vigorously steered the course of her natal house against her nuptial one: she replaced Ptolemy III with the Antigonid Demetrios 'the Fair' as the husband of her daughter Berenike (II). The scandalous intrigue of her affair with her son-in-law recounted in Justin will be called into question when compared with the epitomizer's less than favourable depictions of other queens. More plausibly, Apama's power basis will be identified amongst the numerous rival factions of Kyrene. Finally, her legacy in shaping the ideological and practical place of royal women in the administration of the Seleukid Empire and perpetuation of the dynasty's interests will be considered.

I. INTRODUCTION

For a fairly modest character in the lively cast of Seleukid women, Apama of Kyrene has a remarkably enduring reputation.¹ She is one of the many Hellenistic women whose meager biographical details leave just enough ambiguity that ancient and modern commentators alike can fit her into whatever analytical context – and cast her in whatever light – they wish. In the ancient sources, she is noteworthy for two things: first, she was the wife of Magas of Kyrene, and second she broke off her daughter Berenike's engagement to Ptolemy III and replaced him with Demetrios Kalos – Demetrios 'the Fair'.² Of her life or character we know little else through explicit testimony, though much has been made of both largely because of Justin's (26.3.1–7) allegation of an affair between Apama and her son-in-law that ended with the couple being caught *in flagrante delictu*.

* I would like to dedicate this chapter to Chis Bennett (†), who passed away on 10 January, 2014. His capability as a computer engineer was rivalled only by his expertise as a pioneering scholar in the realm of digital humanities, especially genealogical research. His use of the web as a platform for the production and dissemination of research is as inspiring as his willingness to make it open-access. His generosity and insight will be sorely missed, and without his contributions to Ptolemaic genealogy, the field would be far more barren turf.

1 The Apama discussed in this chapter is Apama [3] in *Der neue Pauly*, Apama (1) in Grainger 1997, 38. For a more detailed reconstruction of the chronology of her life, see McAuley 2013 s. v. 'Apama of Cyrene.' Bennett 2001–2014 lists her as 'Apama/Arisonoe' in his detailed entry on her.

2 Paus.1.7.3 for her marriage to Magas, and Just. 26.3.1–7 for marital manoeuvrings.

As a result of this tale of fatal attraction she is more infamous than famous among subsequent authors, and tends to be the subject of the same scorn with which Justin recounted her marital escapades. Her ill repute among contemporary scholars spans over two centuries: as early as 1807, John Gillies, the Royal Historiographer for Scotland, wrote that she is 'one of those infamous females, whose profligacy still more disgraced, than their beauty adorned, the thrones of Alexander's successors'.³ Though Gillies was the first to brand Apama as the typical 'evil female' of the Hellenistic Period, he was by no means the last. Edwyn Bevan happily followed in his footsteps, writing in 1927 that 'in the bold and masterful assertion of her passions and ambitions, Apama was another of those terrible Macedonian princesses whom we meet with throughout this history'.⁴

Our judgements have since gradually softened, and it has taken more than a century for scholars to embrace the idea that her intervention in her daughter's marriage was driven by anything other than naked lust.⁵ Several authors have come to scratch beneath the surface of her actions and realise they were driven by a combination of residual loyalty to her natal house and the desire to promote its strategic interests.⁶ While recent commentators have generally acknowledged why Apama switched her daughter's marriage plans, the larger and more puzzling question of *how* she managed to do so has been left unanswered. For a short period of four or five years following her husband's death, Apama is recognized as having 'ruled Kyrene,' to quote one biographical dictionary, but the source of her influence, the mechanism of her power, and their implications for our understanding of royal femininity in the Seleukid Dynasty remain shrouded in mystery.⁷

My aim in this chapter is thus to examine the life and career of Apama of Kyrene with an eye to understanding the passive and active roles of an early princess such as her in the broader designs of the Seleukid dynasty. Beginning with the diplomatic and strategic context of her marriage to Magas, we shall then chart her course through Kyrenaean politics, which led to her nuptial manoeuvrings in order to gain some measure of insight into the development and character of such active female influence. I hypothesize that Justin's tale of her scandalous affair is little more than debaucherous fluff; the subsequent embellishment of a later author with a penchant for courtly intrigue and a deep disdain for such female influence. Instead, the core of her actions reveals Apama to be a shrewdly calculating player in the arena of Hellenistic politics rather than a victim of her uncontrollable desire, and one who was keenly aware of her own status.

3 Gillies 1807, 604.

4 Bevan 1927, 74. Other earlier treatments of Apama are Bevan 1902, 1.246–7 and 173–8; Bouché-Leclercq 1913–1914, 2.531 among others below.

5 Grainger 2010, 81–82; Laronde 1987, 380–1, Llewellyn-Jones & Winder 2011, 248–9.

6 A sentiment most explicitly captured by Hölbl 2001, 45. Grainger 2010, 147–9 also mentions the political reorientation of Kyrene with this marriage.

7 Lightman & Lightman 2000, s.v. 'Apama'. Her inclusion in such a general biographical dictionary is noteworthy in and of itself, and the editors tread the line between accepting the story of her affair with Demetrios while also attributing her actions to diplomatic concerns.

Before we begin, though, there is a broader methodological point to be made that I have introduced elsewhere. ‘Secondary’ women such as Apama – i.e. women who are part of the royal family but not the immediate line of succession – have been described ‘legitimizing tokens’ who are given away ‘as if [they] were a piece of furniture.’⁸ They are, according to the *opinio communis*, little more than diplomatic chits good for only one or two uses through their marriages, and then discarded into acquiescent obscurity. The presumption has been that once married, such women sever all ties with their natal houses and passively embrace the agenda of their nuptial family.⁹ Apama reminds us that the reality was much different: though never destined to be queen in her own right, she still had a part to play, and the bonds of her loyalty to her family were sufficiently strong to endure three decades of marriage in distant Kyrene. In this sense, I argue that she stands for many of those sisters, aunts, and cousins whose careers escape our notice by omission or destruction, but left their mark all the same. Through considering Apama we might glean some insight into them as well.

II. ACT I: THE PRINCESS BRIDE

As is so often the case with Hellenistic royal women within and without the Seleukid dynasty, Apama first graces our evidentiary record at the time of her marriage, not her birth. While narrating Kyrenaian affairs under the early Ptolemies, Pausanias (1.7.3) mentions that Magas had as his wife ‘Apama, the daughter of Antiochos, son of Seleukos,’ (γυναικα ἔχων Ἀπάμην Ἀντιόχου τοῦ Σελεύκου θυγατέρα) in a context that we can reliably date to some point between 279 and 275.¹⁰ We shall turn to the diplomatic and strategic background to the marriage shortly, but first Pausanias’ testimony is immediately useful for determining when she was born and what place our young princess had in the royal family.

According to the Geographer her father was Antiochos I; a fact confirmed by a fragment of Porphyry (F 32.5) in Eusebius (1.40.5; Schoene p.249), who adds that Stratonike was her mother.¹¹ In Apama’s case, though, we can hazard a guess at her date of birth with unusual precision: if she was of marriageable age by 279–275 she

8 Ogden 1999, 155 describes them as ‘legitimizing tokens’ while Whitehorne 2001, 151 introduces the furniture metaphor to describe Kleopatra Thea from pp.150–63. Macurdy 1932, 5–6 goes so far as to state outright that the chief value of a monarch’s daughter was in marriage as a means of alliance; particularly among the Seleukids. Bielman-Sánchez 2003, 47 further encapsulates the idea with her assertion that “les hommes demeuraient les maîtres d’un jeu dont les femmes étaient les pions passifs”, thereby following Bikerman 1938, 26–7. I introduce the analytical category of ‘secondary women’ in McAuley forthcoming, with a full discussion of the broader historiographical context.

9 A tendency both recapitulated and refuted by Carney 2011, 201 which contains her brilliant review of the current scholarly consensus.

10 Grainger 2010, 81–3 for the chronology of Magas’ early reign in Kyrene, as well as Laronde 1987, 356–361.

11 John Malalas 8.198, 8.203 complicates the matter by listing Apama as a daughter of Seleukos by his wife Apama, but I take the congruent testimonies of Porphyry and Pausanias to be au-

must have been born c.290 at the latest, and given that her parents were not married until 294 or 293 (Plut. *Dem.*38.1), she must have been born at some point around 292 or slightly later.¹² We can count her as the first born of the royal couple's children, and was likely followed by her brothers Seleukos, Antiochos, and then her younger sister Stratonike.¹³ We have little beyond conjecture when it comes to the details of her early life, though her pedigree is equal parts interesting and overlooked. Given her paternity she would have been one-quarter Persian, and we can only wonder whether she would have been bilingual as her father might well have been. Her Seleukid background was complemented by her mother's Antigonid roots, to which she perhaps remained more attuned than we might think in light of her subsequent influence in Kyrene. It is all too easy to forget that by this point these Hellenistic dynasties had barely entered their second or third generations and thus the borders between houses were as yet transient; with the gift of hindsight we make the distinction between Seleukid and Antigonid much sharper than it was.

It was as a teenager then that she was sent to Kyrene to marry a man who would have been at least twice her age – creating a differential that is not altogether unusual in the early Hellenistic context. Magas, the stepson of Ptolemy I, had been made governor of the Kyrenaika c.300 thanks largely to his mother's influence.¹⁴ He came into possession of a region that had only barely been brought under the Ptolemaic yoke, and remained characterised by deep divisions between wealthy aristocrats and a riotous democratic faction that was decidedly not in favour of Ptolemaic overlordship.¹⁵ It was only after five years of campaigning that he managed to bring the city and region in line, and it remained a fairly loyal Ptolemaic possession for the rest of his stepfather's reign (Paus.1.6.8). After the accession of his half-brother Ptolemy II, the ties between Kyrene and Alexandria quickly began to fray. Early in his reign Philadelphos set about consolidating his power by mur-

thoritative. Errors of descent and heredity, of course, are all too common in Malalas and this would seem to be another exemplar of the trend.

- 12 For the marriage of Antiochos and Stratonike, see Harders, Almagor, and Erickson & Engels in this volume.
- 13 Antiochos and Stratonike's son Seleukos was named co-regent in 266/265 and thus must have been older than his replacement in 262/261, Antiochos – cf. Parker and Dubberstein 1946, 20, Trog.Prol.26, Grainger 1997, 66. Antiochos II's birth is conventionally placed around 286, and the only other child in the family, Stratonike, was of marriageable age around 255 BC when she was wed to Demetrios II of Macedon. This series of reconstructions leaves Apama as her parents' first child. For the full details of the family of Antiochos and Stratonike see the relevant entries on McAuley 2013, namely 'Antiochus I' and 'Antiochus II.'
- 14 The Magas treated here is *DNP* Magas [2], 'Magas of Cyrene' in Bennett 2001–2014. See Chamoux 1956, 18 for the precise chronology of Magas' reign in Kyrene. The beginning of his governorship is generally placed around 300. Pausanias 1.7.0 attributes his appointment to the influence of his mother, Berenike I.
- 15 For the various upheavals in Kyrene from 330–300, see Laronde 1987, 41–45; 85–91; 349–62. See McAuley 2015 for a detailed analysis of the federal tendencies of the unruly region, and Ptolemy's settlement of it. Langher 1998 also discusses the preceding revolt of Ophellas, and Machu 1951 remains the standard work for the royal-civic dynamic in the early Hellenistic period.

dering all of his relatives who could potentially challenge his claim to the throne, and it is quite likely that Magas feared he would be counted in their number.¹⁶

By the eve of the First Syrian War this anxiety, combined with escalating personal antagonism between the unhappy half-brothers, led Magas to seek out alternatives – though we must not completely discount the possibility that he felt himself entitled to the Egyptian throne as well. The timing was ripe for Antiochos, who by all accounts would have been quite happy to have a sympathetic ally at the head of a large, wealthy region that was conveniently placed at Philadelphos' rear when his attention was drawn to the East. Hence, in Pausanias (1.7.1), Magas appears as having revolted against Philadelphos and leading a Kyrenaian army into Egypt – though I would argue that Pausanias has reversed the sequence of events by placing the revolt before the marriage. Instead, I agree with Bevan, Grainger, and Marquaille in thinking it more likely that a disaffected Magas came to the attention of Antiochos I as he was soliciting allies against the Ptolemies.¹⁷ His marriage to Apama thus provided further confirmation of his alliance with Antiochos, and symbolically expressed the new union between Kyrene and the Seleukids against Philadelphos. Apama, we must note, had no say in the matter.

The mechanism is one that we see repeated frequently in the subsequent history of the dynasty: a Seleukid monarch strikes an alliance with a subordinate, whose pledges of loyalty and fealty are both recognised and reinforced by marriage to a Seleukid princess of the main bloodline.¹⁸ What is noteworthy about Apama is that hers is the first such marriage that is explicitly attested in the history of the dynasty: this system of regional rule via client proxy has been typically held as symptomatic of Seleukid decline; a stop-gap measure to prevent dissolution when direct administration was no longer feasible.¹⁹ With the early date of this marriage in c.275, though, we are reminded that this diplomatic prominence of royal Seleukid women is nearly as old as the dynasty itself, belonging squarely to its heyday rather than its twilight.

Apama, for her part, played a similar legitimating role in the Kyrenaian court to those which subsequent generations of Seleukid princesses would reprise in Kappadokia, Pontos, Bithynia, and Pergamon. With his Seleukid bride, recognition from Antiochos, and a loyal region under his command, Magas had all that he needed in order to declare himself a *basileus* in his own right, and it is generally agreed that he would have assumed the royal title before launching his expedition into Egypt. Though his revolt failed for a variety of (semi-) extraneous reasons, his

16 For the early reign of Philadelphos see Hölbl 2001, 38–45, and Marquaille 2008, 44–7 with notes.

17 Bevan 1902, 1.107; Grainger 2010, 81–91, and Marquaille 2008, 44 for the revised chronology. See also Demetr. Byz. FGrH 162 T 1; Primo 2009, 104 ff.

18 As discussed in McAuley forthcoming. The dynamic of Seleukid 'vassal rule' has been analysed by Capdetrey 2007, Bikerman 1938, as well as Engels 2011 and Grainger 2010, 138–9. The mechanism is also considered by several chapters in Erickson ca. 2016, particularly those by McAuley, Strootman, and Mitchell.

19 For the full scholarly history of this negative view, see Engels 2011, 22 n27. For the revisionist view, see the forthcoming volume edited by Erickson ca. 2016.

comportment in its aftermath is telling.²⁰ Over the next two decades, Magas did all that we would typically expect a Hellenistic king to do: he donated generously to the temples of Apollo and Demeter, built a new monument to Zeus, propagated the cult of Zeus Soter, and appears epigraphically as a priest of Apollo.²¹ He minted coinage bearing his name and Kyrenaian symbols, attracted men of letters to a burgeoning literary court, struck treaties with the Oreioi in Krete, led campaigns against Libyan tribes, and was listed along with Antiochos and Antigonos in the decree of King Ashoka.²² In return he was recognised by the populace as the monarch he was: one of his soldiers dedicated arms and armour to him and his successes, and a fragmentary epigraphic find hints that he may have been the object a royal cult.²³

I elaborate on Magas' royal bearing in such detail because I argue that in no small way this was contingent on Apama. Without her presence and the reminder of Antiochos' favour that she embodied, and without her stature, renown, and pedigree, Magas would not have received the widespread recognition he enjoyed. His marriage to Apama and his full adoption of the royal mantle must be more than mere coincidence. On his own, he was the stepson of a prominent monarch, but with his marriage to a princess who hailed from two of the preeminent families in the early Hellenistic world he was elevated to their plane. The enthusiasm with which Magas was recognised as king both internally and externally is readily indicative of the strength of his perceived status: his own subjects, his diplomatic allies, even the distant Mauryan Emperor had no qualms in identifying his royalty in a way that his own lineage alone would perhaps not permit. Here we see the intersection between politics and pedigree that had already become part and parcel of Hellenistic *dynasteia*. In the process we are reminded that during early third century the divisions between the successor's dynasties were still flimsy, and in this adolescent balance of power a regional potentate such as Magas could be reckoned as a principal player.²⁴

Apama's marriage to Magas thus reveals the passive side of female influence in Seleukid diplomatic affairs. It is in this experience that she plays the legitimating role which many have aptly described, as she embodied the prestige and renown of her natal family and transferred some measure of it to her new husband.²⁵ Given

20 The attack on Ptolemy II, to quote the analysis of DNP s. v. Magas [2], 'was not well-coordinated' with his Seleukid counterparts. Magas made it to within 60km of Alexandria, but was forced to return because of a Libyan uprising (Paus.1.7.3–6). It is likely, though, that he retained Paraetionium (Plut.Mor.449e, 458a). Grainger 2010, 82–91 for the broader narrative of the revolt.

21 For his benefactions in Kyrene see Caltabiano 1996, 117 and Laronde 1987, 362–70.

22 For his coinage see Caltabiano 1996; for treaty negotiations with the Oreioi see Bile 2005; his diplomatic autonomy is discussed by Chamoux 1956, 31 and his general reign by Machu 1951.

23 Hints of a royal cult come from SEG 9.112, discussed by Marquaille 2003, while Chamoux 1958, 574–580 annotates a votive description from one of his soldiers.

24 Cohen 1995, 210 reminds us of this nascent distinction when he writes of a slightly earlier decade that 'it is possible that the distinction of king, prince, dynast, and agent, and the responsibilities of each, were not fully defined at the time.'

25 For the Makedonian ideology behind this legitimating function of royal women, see Carney

Magas' subsequent success as a *de facto* independent monarch, the mechanism must have been effective on the internal and external registers – especially considering that his initial grab for power in Alexandria failed. While we must acknowledge the *gravitas* of Apama's presence in the court of Kyrene, we must also take care not to overstate the case: she was a mere teenager whose father chose her husband in the calculated promotion of his own strategic interests. She had no agency whatsoever in the transaction, no recourse to her own preference or inclination – in this act she was a purely passive figure, one who simply did what she was told and obediently went off to North Africa. There she remained, and her continued presence stood as an enduring reminder of not only her natal family's status, but also the alliance which her marriage symbolized.

III. ACT II: DESPERATE HELLENISTIC HOUSEWIVES?

After Pausanias' mention of Magas' failed revolt of c.275 and marriage to Apama, the prevailing darkness of our evidentiary record envelops the couple in obscurity until the death of the Kyrenaian King at some point in the mid-250s²⁶ His intermittent appearances over the preceding decade and a half are generally unhelpful, and limited to either epigraphy for which we lack any definitive context, or rather more fantastic cameos in Athenaeus (12.550).²⁷ Apama's disappearance from the record is complete, and we can only surmise that she quietly remained in the Kyrenaian court with a watchful eye on the international stage. Before his death, however, Magas made one critical decision which would later galvanize Apama into action: it would seem that relations between Kyrene and Alexandria gradually thawed after Magas' attempted revolt, and in the years before his death Magas reconciled himself with Philadelphos by betrothing his daughter Berenike to the heir apparent of the Ptolemaic throne – the future Ptolemy III.²⁸ If we place Berenike's birth in the years immediately following the marriage of her parents, she would have been quite young at the time of her betrothal, barely an adolescent.

1995 and 2000.

- 26 See Coşkun in this volume (n. 94) for a lower chronology of the decree of Ashoka, the betrothal of Ptolemy III, and its Ptolemaic ramifications. He follows Hölbl 2001, 57, who has placed the Ashoka decree to roughly 250–249; following this reconstruction the events of Apama must have taken place shortly thereafter. In this, both agree with the chronology put forward by Laronde 1988, 381–2. I propose a slightly higher chronology here, in which I date the death of the Magas to the mid-250s and the importation of Demetrios Kalos to the close of the decade. The lower chronology would seem too packed with events and changes of power to be plausible for a period of two or three years; simple concerns of communication and transport times would seem to argue for a more prolonged sequence. See Bennett 2001–2014, s. v. 'Berenike II' notes 4–10 for further conflicting viewpoints.
- 27 The conspicuous absence of Kyrene from Ptolemaic mechanisms of administration is telling, as discussed by O'Neil 1998, 66–9 and Marquaille 2008, 43–59. Chamoux 1956 and Bile 2005 likewise elaborate on Magas' reign, as does Laronde 1987, 367–380.
- 28 Justin 26.3.1–3 for the betrothal, whose diplomatic dynamics are discussed by Llewellyn-Jones & Winder 2011; Buttery 1992, 63; Laronde 1987, 380–1; see also Grainger 2010, 146–50.

These political and nuptial developments would decidedly not have been desirable for the Seleukid princess who had remained in Kyrene decades after the momentary utility of her marriage had passed. Her daughter's marriage and the rapprochement of Kyrene and Alexandria which it represented, to quote Hölbl, 'would invalidate the very purpose of her own marriage, namely that of making an independent Cyrenaica a base for the Seleukid kingdom'.²⁹ Apama certainly would have been aware of such ramifications; even if we accept a purely passive role for such princesses as her; it is not as if they were sent away in marriage without any awareness of the pragmatic purpose that it served. Her indignation would have been personal as well as strategic: Berenike's marriage to Ptolemy would have been a slight to her own marriage, yes, but moreover it would be a strategic setback for her family if Kyrene were to revert back to Ptolemaic hands. A critical foothold in the broader struggle over Syria and the Aegean would be lost, and the Ptolemaic Western flank secured – we must also presume that she was aware of this, as her later actions imply. The famous passage of Justin (26.3.2–7) relates the events as they unfolded, meriting quotation in full:

[2] During the same period King Magas of Kyrene died. Before his illness Magas had betrothed his only daughter Berenike to his brother Ptolemy's son in order to end his quarrel with Ptolemy. [3] After the king's death, however, the girl's mother Arsinoë wished to annul the marriage, which had been arranged against her wishes. She sent a deputation to summon from Macedonia Demetrios, brother of King Antigonos, to marry the young woman and assume the throne of Kyrene, Demetrios being himself the son of a daughter of Ptolemy. [4] Demetrios wasted no time. The winds in his favour, he came swiftly to Kyrene; but from the start he behaved arrogantly through confidence in his good looks, with which his mother-in-law had already started to become infatuated. He was overbearing in his dealings with the royal family and the military; and he had also turned his attempts to ingratiate himself from the girl to her mother. [5] This first made the girl suspicious, then it provoked the animosity of the people and the soldiers. [6] Consequently, the support of the entire population veered towards the son of Ptolemy, and a plot was hatched against Demetrios. Assassins were dispatched to deal with him when he had come to the bed of his mother-in-law. [7] Arsinoë, however, heard her daughter's voice as the latter stood at the door giving orders for her mother to be spared, and for a little while she protected her lover by shielding him with her body. He was however slain, and Berenike, by his death, both took revenge for the licentiousness of her mother, without violation of her duty to her, and, in choosing a husband, followed the judgment of her father.³⁰

29 Hölbl 2001, 45

30 *2 Per idem tempus rex Cyrenarum Magas decedit, qui ante infirmitatem Beronice, unicam filiam, ad finiendam cum Ptolomeo fratre certamina filio eius desponderat. 3 Sed post mortem regis mater uirginis Arsinoe, ut inuita se contractum matrimonium solueretur, misit qui ad nuptias uirginis regnumque Cyrenarum Demetrium, fratrem regis Antigoni, a Macedonia arcescerent, qui et ipse ex filia Ptolomei procreatus erat. 4 Sed nec Demetrius moram fecit. Itaque cum secundante uento celeriter Cyrenas aduolasset, fiducia pulchritudinis, qua nimis placere socrui coeperat, statim a principio superbus regiae familiae militibusque inpotens erat studiumque placendi a uirgine in matrem contulerat. 5 Quae res suspecta primo uirgini, dein popularibus militibusque inuisa fuit. 6 Itaque uersis omnium animis in Ptolomei filium insidiae Demetrio comparantur, cui, cum in lectum socrus concessisset, percussores inmittuntur. 7 Sed Arsinoe audita uoce filiae ad fores stantis et praecipientis ut matri parceretur, adulterum paulisper corpore suo protexit. 8 Quo interfecto Beronice et stupra matris salua pietate ulta est et in matrimonio sortiundo iudicium patris secuta.* (Translation adapted from J. Yardley 1994)

I must make a few observations about the text before moving on to its context. First, Justin identifies the *mater virginis* as Arsinoë, which has been taken by some as indication that Magas had a second, Ptolemaic, wife after Apama presumably died. I argue that this is incorrect, and agree with Bevan when he writes that Apama is here mistakenly called Arsinoë ‘by a characteristic slovenliness of Justin.’³¹ Many other scholars have followed this identification largely out of preference, but Chris Bennett has recently brought two further pieces of evidence forward which support the notion that this Arsinoë is a Justinian slip.³² First, Appian’s *Syriaka* (1.3) mentions that Antiochos III, speaking to Roman ambassadors before the marriage of Ptolemy V to Kleopatra ‘Syra,’ asserts that he is already a relative of the Ptolemies. Such a relationship – second cousins, to be precise – is only possible through Berenike II’s half-Seleukid descent as the daughter of Apama and Magas. Second, and more concretely, P.J. Parsons published an article in 1977 in which he details that P.Oxy. 20.2258 = Callimachus F 110 contains a scholion which explicitly notes that Berenike II was the daughter of Magas and Apama.³³ Any ambiguity is thus resolved, and we are quite safe in henceforth presuming that Justin is relating the actions of our Apama, not another Arsinoë. The distinctly Seleukid flavour of the princess’ actions dispels any further doubt, as if we accept that this is an Arsinoë we are left with the even more puzzling question of why a Ptolemaic princess would solicit an Antigonid suitor for her daughter.

The rest of the story as related by Justin, of course, does not end well. Demetrios the ‘Fair’ arrives, and his passions quickly turn away from his teenage bride and towards his mother-in-law. The two have an affair, and this scandal, along with Demetrios’ haughty and overbearing conduct towards the Kyrenaians, leads Berenike and her supporters to barge in on the couple in all of their illicit vigour and kill Demetrios despite the desperate protestations of Apama. All of this makes for lively reading, of course, but many aspects of the story remain puzzling. Surprisingly, the scandalous tale has been taken at face value by several contemporary scholars who tend to accept Justin’s allegations and move along without comment. Llewellyn-Jones & Winder sum up this unsatisfactory causality for Berenike’s subsequent marriage when they write ‘it is usually explained by recourse to Justin’s juicy story involving the sexual shenanigans of Berenike’s mother, Apame’.³⁴ Yet if we look beyond these ‘sexual shenanigans’ and dig beneath the surface of Apama’s actions we see much more than simply middle-aged lust for a handsome young Antigonid, and a more thoughtful reconstruction tells greatly of Apama’s own influence and intentions.

Discarding, for the moment, the more illicit elements of the story reveals that it may contain a kernel of historical truth, and to gain some glimpse of this we must consider both the external and internal dynamics of power. First: why did Apama select Demetrios Kalos as a replacement suitor for Berenike, and what does this tell

31 Bevan 1902, 1.178, versus Beloch *GG* IV.2, 190, who is among those who thinks that Arsinoë is a second, Ptolemaic wife of Magas.

32 For the full scholarly discussion see Bennett 2001–2014 s. v. ‘Apama’ n. 6

33 Parsons 1977, see also Bennett’s (2001–2014) notes 7 and 8 on other relevant hypotheses.

34 Llewellyn-Jones & Winder 2011, 248.

us of her own designs? If we place her intervention in the broader diplomatic context of the mid-250s BC then Apama's choice of Demetrios seems less like an impulsive substitute and more like a calculated and shrewd manoeuvre. The first half of the third century BC revolved around the coalition of the Antigonids and the Seleukids against the Ptolemies, and with the accession of Antiochos II to the throne this state of affairs was perpetuated and reinforced.³⁵ At roughly the same time as Apama summoned Demetrios, the ties that bound the Seleukids and Antigonids were again tightened with the marriage of Apama's sister Stratonike to Demetrios II in c.260–255. Note that by now the two houses were so connected that, as Bevan remarks, 'Stratonice was a princess who was at once the half-sister and the niece of his mother and the niece of his father'.³⁶

Apama's refusal of Ptolemy III and importation of Demetrios Kalos as her daughter's husband thus not only steered Kyrene away from the Ptolemies, but also brought it in line with contemporary Seleukid interests by creating yet another bond of interrelation in their Antigonid alliance. In the process she essentially killed two birds with one stone: she transformed what was potentially a disastrous situation into an opportunity to strengthen local Seleukid interests while promoting their wider diplomatic agenda at the same time.

That Apama would do this after 25 years of marriage in Kyrene is telling as to where her true loyalties lay, and further bolsters Carney's assertion that 'we underestimate the degree to which women in the Hellenic world continued to identify with the families of their birth'.³⁷ Though she may have married into a fledgling independent dynasty descended from the Ptolemies, she was a Seleukid in c.275 and so she remained a quarter century later. This is all in the realm of the individual, but her manoeuvre moreover reveals the depth of her attunement to broader Hellenistic currents of favour and politics. She was not only sensitive to this emergent network of power, she was an active participant in it. The contemporary context of her actions suggests that she had some degree of communication with her native dynasty, leading us to wonder what degree of contact remained between such women as her and their families.³⁸ Apama's own descent further complicates the matter: the oft-overlooked fact that she herself was half-Antigonid prompts further speculation regarding the nature of her relationship with her mother's family, and raises the questions of whether she was regularly in touch with the Antigonids as well. Such questions garner us little more than thoughtful musing in return, but still serve as a reminder that what we will later identify as unquestionably Antigonid, Seleukid, or Ptolemaic were as yet transitory blocks of power.

35 For the broader political context see Grainger 2010, 147–9; Bevan 1902, 1.173 and Grainger 2010, 147–8 discuss the reorientation of the kingdom through this marriage as does Hölbl 2001, 45–50.

36 Bevan 1902, 1.173–4. The marriage itself is attested by Eus. *Chron.* 1249; Just. 28.1.1–4; Grainger 1997, 66. Cf. the online genealogy for further elaboration of these marriages.

37 Carney 2011, 201.

38 Given Magas' strong connections in Krete, it would seem that we are even presented with a vector of communication between Kyrene and the Antigonid court. See notes above, and Grainger 2010 139–40, and Bile 2005.

Now to the other side of the coin: with some better understanding of why she did it, the more complicated question of how remains. Even a failed attempt at guiding succession such as hers required some measure of support and personal influence within Kyrene, but from where had she acquired it? The answer lies in the contemporary divisions within the city itself. The history of Kyrene throughout the fifth and fourth centuries was defined by bitter *stasis* driven by strife between *oi ktematikoi* and *oi demotikoi*.³⁹ The former were landed, wealthy aristocrats who comprised the cavalry corps of the city and dominated the majority of civic offices. The latter, the democratic faction, were the hoplites, commoners, tradesmen, and minor landowners who filled the citizen body and most of the army.⁴⁰ The two groups had been violently at odds throughout the fourth century, and the conflict was left unresolved when Ptolemy I steamrolled his way through the Kyrenaika in 320. The Kyrenaians themselves were left cowed and intimidated, but the imposition of Ptolemaic power did not heal such rifts; they were only bandaged by the exercise of overwhelming force and the imposition of external governors. Ptolemy and later Magas tried to keep the two factions in check with a strong hand, but neither was able to resolve the deeper systematic issues which kept them divided.⁴¹ The frequency of revolts and uprisings in the early Ptolemaic period speaks to this clearly: such divisions persisted even to the extent that while Magas was away leading his expedition against Philadelphos in 275, the democratic faction seized the moment to revolt.⁴² Magas was forced to quell the uprising, and with his return the pro-Ptolemaic aristocrats were restored in civic power. All of this occurred barely twenty years before Apama came to prominence, thus both the wounds and memory would not yet have healed entirely.

During the remaining years of Magas' reign Kyrene appears to have been relatively calm and peaceful, and the two factions were content with the momentary *status quo*. The aristocrats were generally pro-monarchy and in favour of involvement with the Ptolemies, and while the democrats remained staunchly against the monarchy and particularly opposed to the Ptolemies, prosperity muzzled their discontent. Both sides of the political divide profited immensely from the reign of Magas and the semi-autonomy that it entailed: the region was opened to broader markets and the lucrative trade they entailed throughout the Aegean and beyond. While Kyrene was nominally part of the Ptolemaic Empire under Magas it was conspicuously exempt from the story of bureaucratic micromanagement and strict

39 See McAuley 2015 for a more detailed discussion of the shifting dynamics of power within the city between 330–300 which continued under Magas. My appellation of the two factions here is based on the terminology used by Diod. 18.19.2–7 in his account of a revolt in 322–321 under Thibron, also recounted by Just. 12.17–21. The terminology is, ultimately, arbitrary but revelatory and we can safely presume the persistence of these power blocks under Ptolemaic rule.

40 Dynamics of civic power within the city are discussed by Laronde 1987, 131–63 and 249–52.

41 For Kyrene under the early Ptolemies see Brun 1993, 185–90; Chamoux 1958, 71–572; Mitchell 1966, 110–3; Machu 1951; Langher 1998; and Bagnall 1976.

42 According to an anecdote of Polyainos 2.28. For the longer history of civic strife in Kyrene between these two groups see McAuley 2015.

taxation that Philadelphos exerted over the rest of his domain.⁴³ So with the reconciliation of Magas and Philadelphos, and the betrothal of their children, the Kyrenaians must have become nervous. The democrats would have chafed at further monarchic control and reversion to the Ptolemaic fold, while the aristocrats feared that the economic boom would come to an end with the imposition of Ptolemaic taxation and stricter control over their land holdings.

With the death of Magas all bets were off, and it was then that Apama chose her moment to act. In her we find a figure of convenience who would have played to the interests of both sides in the promotion of her own strategic agenda, while enjoying particular favour from the aristocrats. An independent Kyrene would remain more desirable to the democrats than a Ptolemaic Kyrene, at least for the moment, while the aristocrats would continue to benefit from the current state of fiscal affairs. To some in the city, the move would come as a benefit, while to many, it would at least not come at a loss. I thus argue that Apama was eminently aware of the vested interests of each of the city's factions, and was able to import Demetrios Kalos with the outright support of the *ktematikoi*, and at least the tacit approval of the *demitikoi*.

In this Apama affords us a fascinating glimpse into the active role of Seleukid princesses in such situations. The time for her passive legitimation had come and gone, and with the death of her husband she was able to momentarily take advantage of the power vacuum and act in her own right. She chose her moment well, an act which in and of itself hints at her own engagement in civic affairs, while the character of her manoeuvre reveals both her abiding loyalty to her family and her understanding of the broader strategic tableau. Her sensitivity is not merely to dynastic affairs, and her awareness not confined to the walls of the palace; her domestic and international influence speaks to her perceived status at home and abroad. That her intervention worked to the benefit of the city's aristocratic bloc hints that she might have also been driven by the interests of the *ktematikoi*, and she may well have realised that it was only with their support that she hoped to retain some measure of personal influence in the city. But the fact that she was a player in the game at all is revelatory in and of itself. We must, however, not tread too closely towards emancipation, and should equally note that her influence in both arenas was derived from her relationship to the men in her life. Her 'international' reputation was contingent on her father, Antiochos I, and later her brother, Antiochos II, while her domestic status derived from her husband.⁴⁴ Yet she was quite capable of wielding this derivative power effectively, and it is precisely in so doing that she provoked the ire of Justin. The Epitomator recurrently reveals himself to be no fan of influential women, particularly when they intrude into a political realm which he views as being exclusively male. It was to this transgression, I argue, that we can attribute her daemonisation in his account, as repugnance at her flash of influence led him to

43 See n. 26 above.

44 Regardless of whether or not she had direct contact with her brother, she would still have been known in the broader political scene as the daughter or sister of the Seleukid king; her pedigree was what enabled her status rather than any action of her own.

recast the tale in a very different light. When we add in the possibility that Justin was working from a pro-Ptolemaic source, his disdain is compounded.⁴⁵

IV. ACT III: EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSIONS

As revelatory and fascinating as Apama's attempt may be, it failed for reasons that were perhaps beyond her control. While Justin would attribute the downfall of Apama and Demetrios to disgust at their sexual impropriety, another detail he provides seems much more credible as the causal factor. He notes that Demetrios' overbearing conduct offended first the royal family and the army (*regiae familiae militibusque*) which later expands into resentment by the *populares* as well (*popularibus militibusque*).⁴⁶ Given that the soldiery of Kyrene – specifically the hoplites and not the cavalry – were far more likely to be part of the democratic faction, it is little surprise that they would be among the first to be offended by the arrogance of a monarch who was supposed to serve their interests. It was this discontent among the democratic faction which proved to be the wellspring of initial support for Berenike, from which the teenage queen drew quite effectively. Apama was thus not the only royal woman in Kyrene who was capable of manipulating the dynamics of civic power to her advantage. What this reconsidered episode comes to represent is the gradual alienation of one faction of Kyrene's populace by the conduct of Demetrios Kalos, resulting in the failure of Apama's marriage plan when this discontent drives the democratic faction momentarily in favour of Berenike as the conspiracy is launched. Demetrios is assassinated, and Apama disappears; it would seem safe to follow Chris Bennett in assuming 'that the rest of [her] life was short and unpleasant,' while her brother seems to have done nothing to change her fate.⁴⁷

The next crest of the wave further reinforces the notion that discontent from the democratic faction brought down Demetrios, not an alleged affair with Apama. After Demetrios was murdered, the democratic faction must have gained momentum at the expense of Berenike, because by 249 Polybios (10.22.3) and Plutarch (*Philo.* 1.4) mention that the people of Kyrene sent for two tyrannicides to come to the city and restore law and order. This brief democratic interlude can accordingly be seen as a direct response to Apama's attempt at steering the course of succession with Berenike being caught in the middle. The factions of the city, as ever, were equally fickle and opportunistic.

Berenike of course would win out in the end with her marriage to Ptolemy III and her subsequent success as one of the most influential and renowned Ptolemaic queens to grace the throne. It is precisely her success that I argue resulted in the disparaging treatment of Apama in the ancient record. Given the prominence of Berenike II in Ptolemaic iconography and literature, according to which she be-

45 Based on Coşkun in this volume, who proposes that Justin was following Phylarchos and this was already working from Ptolemaic source material.

46 Laronde 1987, 380–382 describes the brief reign of Demetrios, while for the early support of Berenike II see Caltabiano 1996 and 1998.

47 Bennett 2001–2014, s. v. 'Apama' n. 8

comes the paragon of the ‘good wife,’ it follows logically that Apama emerged as the evil, corrupt foil to young Berenike’s virtue in the eyes of Ptolemaic commentators.⁴⁸ It is Apama’s actions that provide the proving ground for Berenike’s courage and fidelity which are so stirringly recounted in the *Coma Berenices*, and this promotion of Berenike’s legacy came at the expense of Apama. Justin’s allegation of Apama’s affair with Berenike’s first, disastrous husband can thus be attributed to the manipulation of tradition as well as the epitomator’s own inclinations; the affair thus becomes the metaphorical expression of Apama’s influence of Demetrios and, in the eyes of Justin, the corruption that naturally follows suit.⁴⁹

On a broader plane, the career of Apama reveals the potential – which in her case was realised – of Seleukid princesses for active and passive influence on their internal and external surroundings. She is not the only such ‘secondary woman’ to influence the affairs of the local dynasty or region into which she married; along with her we can likewise count Stratonike and Antiochis of Kappadokia, Antiochis of Armenia, and Antiochis of Pergamon, to name a few. The lives of princesses such as these reveal the establishment of a vassalistic network of loyalty and governance in the Seleukid Empire much earlier than we had previously thought, and dispel the notion that such a network is inherently a sign of decline.⁵⁰

Yet she remains a fascinating instar not only because she is the first Seleukid woman known by name to be betrothed in such a diplomatic exchange, but moreover by virtue of the dualistic role that her experience reveals. In her marriage, she was a passive scion of her dynasty, a mark of favour and legitimation that was used by her father in promotion of his strategic ambitions, and by her husband in the advance of his own standing. This did not sever her familial ties, and neither should we equate such apparent passivity with total isolation. Her husband’s wavering loyalties prompted her to act in the wake of his death with audacity and astuteness borne of sensitivity to international politics. Though the act itself failed, the attempt reveals much, and the consequence of this failure was her vilification in the eyes of the eventual victors. It is no small testament to the various shades of influence wielded by Seleukid women such as Apama and Berenike that the course of Hellenistic Kyrene was so profoundly steered by the competition of a mother and her daughter. In our search to better understand the place of royal women like her, though, we must resist our inclination towards idealistic exaggeration and acknowledge the situation for what it was: it was only within parameters that were set exclusively by men, be it her husband, brother, or father that she or Berenike were able to carve out their particular niche. The lives of her and her daughter were ultimately subject to the whims of their male relatives or partners; their power and

48 Parsons 1977, 8–10. Also see Bacchielli 1995, and Llewellyn-Jones & Winder 2011 for her place in Ptolemaic ideology. See also Pol. 5.36.1 praising ‘the high courage of Berenike’.

49 The idea of evil female influence recurs elsewhere in the illustrative anecdote at 30.2 describing a nightmarish state of affairs in which women run a kingdom. The general resentment to female influence in ancient historiographers is best captured by Carney 1995.

50 See also the papers by Harders, Erickson & Engels, and Strootman in this volume. The forthcoming volume edited by Erickson also provides numerous examples of dynastic structures being indicative of imperial and territorial vitality, not decline. Cf. also Engels 2011.

influence were, like these two women themselves, exceptional in nature. While for them we are graced with a relative abundance of detail, they give us cause to wonder about all those other women of the dynasty who languish in evidentiary silence.

MARRIAGE DIPLOMACY AND THE POLITICAL ROLE OF ROYAL WOMEN IN THE SELEUKID FAR EAST

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ABSTRACT

In 1957, A. K. Narain refuted W. W. Tarn's claim of kinship between the Seleukids on the one hand and the Diodotid and Euthydemid dynasties of Greco-Baktria and India on the other. Though his position has become the established one ever since, there is enough historiographical and numismatic evidence to suggest that the Seleukids used marriage connections as a preferred strategy for managing control over what is today modern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and North-Western India. A close analysis of the iconography found on Greco-Baktrian and Indo-Greek coins will reveal a number of potential connections with Seleukid coins which argue strongly for political relations. Moreover, there is a small amount of literary and onomastic evidence which will be examined in order to test the hypothesis that these ties were secured mainly by marital alliances. The women of the Seleukid house must thus have played a key role in this. Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about them, not even their names. This study seeks to utilize some of the recent work done in the area of Seleukid genealogy in order to identify some suitable candidates for marriage into those eastern dynasties. It will further be argued that, owing to the policies laid down by Alexander and continued by the Seleukids for controlling the Upper Satrapies through dynastic marriages, Hellenistic Baktria and India remained effectively 'Seleukid' even until the reign of Eukratides I (ca. 170–145 BC). Moreover, owing to the central role played by Seleukid princesses in legitimizing the rule of Greco-Baktrian and Indo-Greek monarchs, these vassal states were effectively transformed into matrilineal monarchies in spite of a preference for the more typical patrilineal succession.

John Nye labelled a state's ability to achieve its aims through attraction rather than coercion 'soft power', noting that when a state's policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, soft power is enhanced.¹ Marriage diplomacy is a good example of soft power that has often been used as an effective tool for empire building. In the fifteenth century the Habsburgs utilized marriage as a strategy for imperial expansion so effectively that they modified a passage from Ovid's *Heroides*² so as to create a motto befitting their imperial policy: *Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube. Nam quae Mars aliis, dat tibi diva Venus*. But their strategy was hardly new. The vast geography and ethno-cultural diversity of the ancient Achaimenid Empire certainly made marriage a useful tool for consolidating the Persian kings' control over

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1 Nye 2004, x.

2 *Ov. Her.* 13.84 *Bella gerant alii, Protesilaos amet.*

their expansive territory.³ Similarly, in the Hellenistic world, the Seleukids would use vassal kings tied to the royal house by marriage to control the eastern fringes of their empire. Seleukid women thus came to play a pivotal role in managing the eastern marches of the empire insofar as they conferred royal legitimacy upon (and ensured the loyalty of) the vassal kings in Seleukid Baktria and India.

In the Spring of 324 BC, Alexander celebrated a mass marriage of Macedonian and Greek men to Persian women at Susa. One of the unions celebrated was between Alexander's general Seleukos and Apama, the daughter of the Baktrian nobleman Spitamenes whose head Alexander had received three years earlier.⁴ Significantly, this was the only marriage of all those celebrated at Susa to last, and while we know nothing of the nature of their personal relationship, there can be no doubt that Seleukos (soon to be Seleukos I) would have been well aware of the strategic value of his marriage for his broader imperial ambitions. Baktria was a very important satrapy to the Seleukids in both strategic and economic terms,⁵ and the personal connections that Apama possessed would have proven invaluable for the maintenance of Seleukos' sovereignty in the region. Prior to the arrival of Alexander, Baktria appears to have been a quasi-feudal society ruled by a landed warrior aristocracy. Political relationships were thus perforce personal and informal.⁶ Maintaining garrisons and settlements of Greek colonists would not always prove a reliable method of control, as the rebellions of Greek settlers in Baktria in the immediate aftermath of Alexander's death testifies;⁷ in any case, the Greek population there must have always been a minority.⁸ Maintaining the loyalty of the non-Greek populations was therefore critical to Seleukid imperial ambitions in the east and personal ties of kinship appear to have been the preferred and most effective means of securing that loyalty.

During his attempt to extend his control over the so-called upper satrapies between 310 and 305 BC, Seleukos' advance through Baktria-Sogdiana was uneventful, an unsurprising fact owing to Apama's kinship ties to the Baktrian nobility. India, however, was another matter. Here Seleukos had no such ties, and would run up against a native Indian king in Chandragupta who was well supplied with armies and resources.⁹ Seleukos crossed the Indus and waged war on Chandragupta¹⁰, but the action proved indecisive and ended in a settlement. The critical factor in this settlement was a marriage alliance. Our two main sources for this marriage are a single passage from Strabo's *Geography* and a brief notice in Appian's *Syrian Wars*.

A close reading of these two passages would seem to suggest that Seleukos I married a relative to Chandragupta Maurya (or perhaps to his son), and also seems

3 On the marriages of Cyrus the Great, cf. Hdt. 1.46. For the marriages of Kambyes II, cf. Hdt. 3.1. On the dynastic marriages of Darius I, cf. Hdt. 3.88, 7.5.1, 7.2, 7.224; see also PF v.92, 24 and 29.

4 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6.

5 Newell 1978, 228–49; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1993, 108; for Baktria's wealth, see Just. *Epit.* 41.1.8.

6 Holt 1995, 11–50 for a general summary of conditions in pre-Alexander Baktria.

7 Diod. Sic. 18.7.

8 Tarn 1951, 118; Mairs 2006, ch. 2.

9 Just. *Epit.* 15.4.

10 App. *Syr.* 55.

to imply that the Seleukids considered the Mauryans their vassal kings in India. Appian thus notes for after 305 BC:

The whole region from Phrygia to the Indus was subject to Seleukos. He crossed the Indus and waged war with Sandrokottos, king of the Indians, who dwelt on the banks of that stream, until they came to an understanding with each other and contracted a marriage relationship (ζῆδον συνέθετο).¹¹

Strabo similarly observes that:

Alexander took [much territory] away from the Arians and established settlements of his own, but Seleukos Nikator gave them to Sandrokottos, upon terms of intermarriage (ἐπιγαμία) and of receiving in exchange five hundred elephants.¹²

Seleukos must have had the upper hand in this confrontation, as Strabo seems to imply that he was in a position to dictate terms and to extract military tribute. He then ceded Aria to Chandragupta and secured his loyalty with a marriage alliance.

It has recently been argued that the marriage alliance mentioned in both Appian and Strabo refers to the right of intermarriage between the *subjects* of Chandragupta and those of Seleukos I,¹³ but such a reading is not without problems. Among the Greeks, marriage laws and citizenship were inextricably bound together as each *polis* passed its own laws relating to marriage and the concomitant legitimacy of progeny.¹⁴ As there was no such thing as ‘Seleukid citizenship’ superseding that of any individual *polis* community, it is highly improbable that Seleukos I entered an agreement with Chandragupta whereby the right of individual *poleis* to determine their own citizenship laws would have been so egregiously abrogated. Moreover, Paul Kosmin notes the existence of several instances in which dynastic marriages were accompanied by territorial concessions as a dowry.¹⁵ Finally, Sonja Plischke notes that Appian’s use of ζῆδον can only refer to a single dynastic marriage.¹⁶ Strabo and Appian must therefore be referring to a marriage alliance between the Seleukid and Mauryan houses; this at least is the simplest reading of the sources.¹⁷ Unfortunately, we have no names and no indication of who married whom, but the proposal of a marriage alliance between the Seleukid and Mauryan houses certainly conforms to the diplomatic strategy employed by Seleukos’ predecessors for securing influence in the far east of the empire and the Mauryans appear to have remained vassals in the eyes of the Seleukids right down to the end of the Mauryan dynasty in ca. 185 BC.¹⁸

11 App. Syr. 55.

12 Strab. Geogr. 15.2.9.

13 Mairs 2006, 52; Thapar 2002, 177; Coloru 2009, 143.

14 See, for instance, the relationship between Miletos and Kyzikos in *Milet* 1.3 no. 137. Note that this inscription dates to before the death of Alexander.

15 Kosmin 2014a, 278, n. 22. Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 2.25.1 in which Darius III offers Alexander a daughter along with control over all the territories east of the Euphrates; cf. Ogden 1999, 80, for the marriage of Ptolemy III to Berenike II, who brought Kyrene as a dowry; cf. Porph. 260. F43 for the marriage of Antiochos II to Berenike ‘the dowry bringer’.

16 Plischke 2014, 190.

17 Kosmin 2014a, 33; For the use of *epigamia* in a dynastic context rather than a juridical context cf. Hdt. 2.147.3; Jos. *AJ* 17.1.9.

18 Ath. 14.67 and Polyb. 11.34.

Royal women were thus critical to Seleukid control of the eastern marches of the empire and nowhere was this more pronounced than in Baktria. As was the case in India, marriage alliance was the Seleukids' preferred policy for exercising indirect control over this difficult-to-govern region and its environs. Seleukos seems to have had little difficulty in governing Baktria, and we are probably safe to speculate that it was his marriage to Apama that ensured the Baktrian nobles' compliance. Unsurprisingly, when Seleukos' son Antiochos was elevated to joint kingship with his father in 292 BC he was sent east to govern the upper satrapies directly,¹⁹ and there can be little doubt that his mother Apama proved as useful to her son as she had to her husband. Baktria was thus quiet even after the assassination of Seleukos I in 281 BC and remained so for the duration of Antiochos' sole reign (281–261 BC).²⁰ When Apama died is not known, but her direct kinship to Antiochos I must surely have granted him some influence over the Baktrian magnates even after her death. His son and successor Antiochos II, however, was not so fortunate: with the ties to the house of Spitamenes now more distant, Antiochos II would have been forced to contemplate another method of exercising Seleukid suzerainty in Baktria. The matter would be brought to a head by the Seleukid satrap of Baktria, Diodotos I, in 250 BC, which (as we will argue) presented Antiochos II with an opportunity to renew his familial ties with the local Baktrian nobility by marriage.

It is widely believed that somewhere between 256 and 239 BC the Seleukid satrap in Baktria, Diodotos I, and his son Diodotos II gradually moved the satrapy of Baktria toward independence,²¹ indicating their ambitions by minting coins in the name of Antiochos II but bearing their own reverse type of thundering Zeus, as can be seen in the specimen in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Diodotid Coin Bearing the Legend 'Of King Antiochos'.

Gold Stater, 8.34 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 236, lot 670: Diodotos I under Antiochos. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.²²

¹⁹ App. Syr. 59.

²⁰ See Engels forthcoming for a discussion of the reign of Antiochos I in the Upper Satrapies.

²¹ Tarn 1951, 72–3; Holt 1999, 100–1; Sidky 2000, 136–44.

²² Cf. Boppearachchi 1991, 41–5 and Holt 1999, 87–101 for a general discussion of Diodotid silver

After the death of Diodotos I in about 239 BC, it is widely believed that his son and successor Diodotos II continued to mint these 'Antiochos' coins for a period before eventually replacing the name of Antiochos with his own and taking the title of 'Basileus,' as can be seen in Figure 2 below, and thereby making Baktria an independent kingdom in its own right.



Figure 2: Diodotid Coin Bearing the Legend 'Of King Diodotos'.

Silver Tetradrachm, 16.01 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 236, lot 168: Diodotos II. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.²³

Recently, however, Jens Jakobsson has argued that the Diodotid coins bearing the name Antiochos have been misidentified, and has instead ascribed them to a heretofore unknown Diodotid king named Antiochos.²⁴ As we shall demonstrate below, Jakobsson's findings are yet further evidence for the crucial role Seleukid women played in maintaining Seleukid authority in Baktria, as it was through marriage ties that the Seleukids were able to transform rebellious satraps into loyal Seleukid vassals.²⁵

Most of the historiographical evidence for events in Seleukid Baktria is found in a very convoluted passage in Justin. In his account of the rise of Parthia under Arsakes I, Justin notes that Diodotos I declared his independence from the Seleukids at about the same time that Arsakes I overran Parthia²⁶ in about 246 BC,²⁷ although

coinage. For bronze coinage bearing Diodotid reverse types but issued in the name of Antiochos II see Holt 1999, 109–15 and Kritt 1996, 43–4. See also <http://coinindia.com/MIG064f-Diodotos-136.16.jpg>.

23 For a general discussion of the coins ascribed to Diodotos II see Holt 1999, 101–6; also <http://coinindia.com/MIG074c-Diodotos-626.28.jpg>.

24 Jakobsson 2010, esp. 26–30.

25 Strootman 2014, 94; Cf. also Wenghofer forthcoming, for the argument that Diodotos I and the Euthydemids were loyal Seleukid vassals in spite of the general consensus to the contrary.

26 Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

27 App. *Syr.* 65, which claims that Arsakes revolted immediately after the death of Antiochos II in that year and which is confirmed by Jerome and Eusebius; Euseb. *Chron.* 95; Hieron. *Chron.* 1769.

the date is not without controversy.²⁸ According to Justin, Diodotos I proclaimed his independence *before* Arsakes I revolted, and was in fact the first of the upper satraps to actually revolt against Seleukid rule.²⁹ It is likely, however, that Justin's use of the word 'revolt' (*deficere*) has been largely overemphasized by modern scholars, as can be inferred by Diodotos' behavior during the insurgency of Arsakes I.³⁰ Justin notes that when Arsakes I rebelled, he feared the combined forces of Seleukos II and Diodotos I,³¹ thus indicating that Seleukos and Diodotos must have been on good terms at the time of Arsakes' insurgency in Parthia,³² which leads some to argue that Justin has erred as to which Diodotos (i.e. I or II) proclaimed himself king of an independent Baktria.³³

The chronology that Justin provides is certainly convoluted, but it is just barely possible to make sense of it. Justin notes that the Baktrian and Parthian revolts occurred 'at the same time'³⁴ but then gives the following seemingly contradictory dates: the First Punic War (264–241 BC), the consulships of M. Atilius Regulus and Manlius Vulso (250 BC), the reign of the great-grandson of Seleukos I (i.e. Seleukos II, reigned 246–225 BC), and the War of the Brothers (246–242/1 or 241–236 BC).³⁵ In this particular passage Justin is talking about both the Baktrian and the Parthian revolts. The reference to the reign of Seleukos II and the War of the Brothers overlap and so must represent the date for one of these revolts, while the First Punic War and the consular dating likewise overlap, leading us to conclude that this must be the date Justin has assigned to the other revolt. As Justin is speaking in general terms about all the revolts in the upper satrapies, he might have simply conflated both dates, but since he also notes that Baktria revolted before Parthia it is only logical to conclude that the consular dating pertains to Baktria while the reference to the reign of Seleukos II and the War of the Brothers relates to the revolt of Arsakes I. The Baktrian revolt must therefore have occurred in the year 250 BC, as the *Consular Fasti* list a pairing of Atilius Regulus and Manlius Vulso as consuls for this year.³⁶ This means that Diodotos I must have been on good terms with Antiochos II *after* he assumed the diadem, as the latter seems to have made no move to recover this supposedly rebellious satrapy. Furthermore, Diodotos I must

28 For the problems in fixing a precise chronology for the Parthian revolt see Brodersen 1986, passim; Lerner 1999, Ch. 1.

29 Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

30 Cf. Wenghofer forthcoming.

31 Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

32 Tarn 1951, 74; Holt 1999, 100–1; Sidky 2000, 150; Lerner 1999, 13, 21.

33 Holt 1999, 100–4, following Tarn 1951, 72 ff.

34 '*Eodem tempore*', Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

35 Just. *Epit.* 41.4. See below, n. 56, on the War of Brothers.

36 Cf. Consuls of the Roman Republic: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~csmackay/Consuls.List.html>. Lerner 1999, 15–7. The Capitoline Fasti list a pairing of A. Manlius Vulso and Q. Caedicius for 256 BC with the latter dying in office and being replaced for the remainder of the year by M. Atilius Regulus. However, the Fasti also list a pairing of L. Manlius Vulso and C. Atilius Regulus for 250 BC. The latter date is generally the preferred one. On the general confusion surrounding the chronology of the Parthian and Diodotid revolts, see Plischke 2014, 216–8; cf. Luther 1999.

have remained amicable with Seleukos II as well, since the two kings appear to be cooperating with one another against Arsakes I in the 230s BC.

It is of course strange that Antiochos II would not have thought that a satrap issuing coins with his own diademed image constituted a declaration of revolt, if these issues had not been authorized. However, Jens Jakobsson's re-examination of the Diodotid coinage has led him to conclude that these 'Antiochos' coins (see below, Fig. 3) were in fact issued by a third heretofore unknown Diodotid king, Antiochos Nikator, whom he places after Diodotos II and before the first king to have succeeded the Diodotid dynasty, Euthydemos I, based on common obverse dies and certain control marks shared by the 'Antiochos' coins and the earliest issues of Euthydemos I.³⁷ Jakobsson's reconstruction is given further support by the medals issued by the Greco-Baktrian king Agathokles (ca. 185–170 BC) which commemorate the reigns of all the rulers of Baktria going back to Alexander himself; among these commemorative medals is an issue bearing the Diodotid reverse type of Thundering Zeus and the name of King Antiochos Nikator.



Figure 3: Commemorative Coin of Agathokles Bearing a Diodotid Reverse Type and the Obverse Legend 'Of Antiochos Nikator'.

Silver Tetradrachm, 16.66 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 262, lot 7299; Pedigree Antiochos Nikator. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.³⁸

It is generally assumed that these coins commemorating Antiochos Nikator recall the 'Antiochos' coins said to have been issued by Diodotos I,³⁹ but such an interpretation must be incorrect. If the Agathokleian commemorative series were meant to commemorate coins minted by Diodotos I in the name of Antiochos II, then the epithet 'Nikator' is problematic as Antiochos II bore the epithet Theos.⁴⁰ Moreover,

³⁷ Jakobsson 2010, 27.

³⁸ Cf. Boppearachchi 1991, 56–9 for a discussion of the coins of Agathokles. Also see <http://coinindia.com/2616-Agathocles-ino-Antiochos-107.12.jpg>.

³⁹ Holt 1999, 89.

⁴⁰ App. Syr. 65; Diod. Sic. 31.19.

all the commemorative medals of Agathokles seem to recall kings, and thus his commemoration of satrapal coinage in this one instance alone seems highly suspect. Thus Agathokles' Antiochos Nikator series does not represent satrapal coinage at all, but the royal coinage of Antiochos Nikator, and the 'Thundering Zeus' reverse type clearly marks him as a Diodotid.

If this reinterpretation of the Diodotid coinage is correct, then the earliest coins issued in the name of Diodotos I (which bear the title 'Basileus') confirm our view that Diodotos I did indeed take the diadem himself as per Justin, and that he did so with the approval of the Seleukid house. It is, moreover, probable that Diodotos I received the diadem from Antiochos II as a vassal king and that his loyalty to the Seleukid house was secured by the well-tried policy of a dynastic marriage to a Seleukid royal woman. It is true that Justin, our main source for events in Seleukid Baktria, uses the word '*deficere*' to describe Diodotos' actions, but how exactly is Justin using '*deficere*' here? From 260 to 253 BC Antiochos II was embroiled in the Second Syrian War. If Diodotos I should have proclaimed himself king at this point, it would have been perfectly in keeping with Antiochos' policies⁴¹ to propose that a diadem in Baktria be given in exchange for yet another marriage alliance. Under such circumstances Diodotos I could reasonably be thought to have 'revolted' insofar as his demand for a diadem at a time of weakness could be seen as extortion, although this revolt need not have been violent. This would explain why Diodotos I faced no reprisals.

But what evidence is there that Diodotos I married a Seleukid princess? The few scattered sources on Seleukid Baktria make no mention of such a connection. William Tarn first suggested this dynastic marriage in 1936,⁴² but Tarn's claims have since been rejected;⁴³ Tarn argued that Diodotos II (the son of Diodotos I) married a Seleukid princess and that the issue from this marriage was another daughter who was in turn married to Euthydemos I. But attempting to establish genealogical relationships on the basis of coin portraits (as Tarn did) is methodologically dubious to say the least. Furthermore, if Diodotos II (rather than Diodotos I) had married a Seleukid princess, we must wonder why Diodotos I remained loyal to the Seleukids while Diodotos II revolted, allying himself with the Parthian rebel Arsakes I immediately after the death of Diodotos I.⁴⁴ Indeed the younger Diodotos would have no obvious cause to revolt from the Seleukids if his reign in Baktria was recognized by them and legitimized by marriage to a Seleukid woman. If, however, there was a marriage between Diodotos I and a Seleukid princess, the events in

41 In order to secure his position and extend his influence throughout Asia, Antiochos II entered into several marriage alliances; in 257 BC he married his sister Stratonike III to Ariarathes III of Kappadokia (Diod. Sic. 31.19), and he eventually concluded a peace with his foe, Ptolemy II, which was also sealed with a marriage alliance between Antiochos and Ptolemy's daughter Berenike in 253/2 BC (App. Syr. 65). To further shore up his position Antiochos II then married another sister, Stratonike II, to Demetrios II in 252 BC (Euseb. Chron. 95). The first seven years of Antiochos' reign were thus occupied with war and the beleaguered Seleukid king appears to have used marriage alliances in order to stabilize his control over a faltering empire.

42 Tarn 1951, 73.

43 Cf. Narain 2003, 28; Holt 1999, 67–72.

44 Just. Epit. 41.4.

Baktria as narrated by the few and seemingly convoluted sources seem to become a little more coherent. Of course, the specific identity of this princess cannot yet be determined, although we might speculate that she could well have been Antiochos' daughter Apama for whom no other marriage connection has been established.

If we posit a marriage connection between a Seleukid princess (Apama?) and Diodotos I, the few scraps of historiographical evidence found in Justin, Strabo, and Polybios appear to suggest that the marriage touched off a political crisis in Baktria. In his prologue to Book 41, Trogus notes that Diodotos I earned the epithet 'Soter' for repelling an invasion of steppe nomads who had succeeded in occupying the satrapal capital Baktra.⁴⁵ This same epithet appears on the commemorative medals of Diodotos I issued by Agathokles.



Figure 4: Commemorative Coin of Agathokles with Diodotid Reverse Type and Obverse Legend Reading 'Of Diodotos Soter'.

Silver Tetradrachm, 16.77 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 216, lot 553: Pedigree Diodotos Soter. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.⁴⁶

The earliest coins ascribed to Diodotos I bear the image of a wreath, which also appears on the commemorative series of Agathokles seen in Figure 4.⁴⁷ Holt and others have assumed this victory to have been over Arsakes I in the 240s BC based largely on the passage from Justin, which, as mentioned above, suggests that Arsakes I feared the combined forces of the king Diodotos I and Seleukos II.⁴⁸ But Justin does not say that any actual battle took place until after the death of Diodotos I, and when war did come to the upper satrapies under Seleukos II around 228 BC,⁴⁹

45 Trog. *Prolog.* 41.

46 Cf. Bopearachchi 1991, 178 Agathocle série 14. Also see <http://coinindia.com/2617-Agathocles-ino-Diodotos-51.1.jpg>.

47 Holt 1999, 99. See especially 92, Figure 4, series B1 ascribed to the elder Diodotos.

48 Holt 1999, 92 and 99.

49 Shipley 2000, 290; Kosmin 2014a, 19; Coloru 2009, 159, n.13.

it did not involve the Diodotids or Baktria.⁵⁰ We must therefore look for a different event to explain the wreath, and Strabo seems to provide us with a useful clue in his description of Baktria.

Strabo notes that Arsakes was of either Skythian or Baktrian origin and that he had fled from Baktria to Parthia where he stirred up revolt owing to his fear of Diodotos.⁵¹ He does not tell us why Arsakes should have so feared Diodotos that he fled to Parthia and caused its revolt. We can only assume that if Antiochos II agreed to recognize Diodotos I as his ally and the legitimate king in Baktria upon his marriage to a Seleukid princess, he would expect Diodotos I to pass the diadem to any male progeny born of his Seleukid wife. If the marriage between Diodotos I and his Seleukid princess occurred in the year 250 BC to coincide with the assumption of the diadem, then a son could have been born as early as 249 or 248 BC. We might, moreover, expect Diodotos I to give his son a Seleukid name. Jakobsson points out: "There is a parallel in the minor kingdom of Commagene in Asia Minor, which was related to the Seleucids on his mother's side, and in which four kings were named Antiochos."⁵² We know, based on Jakobsson's reinterpretation of the Diodotid coinage, that there was a third Diodotid king named Antiochos Nikator who ruled after Diodotos II and before Euthydemus I, the king who ultimately extinguished Diodotid rule in Baktria.

Shortly after Diodotos I married a Seleukid princess in 250 BC, then, a son was born, perhaps in 249 or 248 BC, who was named Antiochos to honour and advertise the connection between the Seleukid and Diodotid dynasties. Antiochos, being a Seleukid on the distaff side, was declared heir to his father's throne. Diodotos' elder son from a previous marriage, Diodotos II (who was either expected to act as regent or was simply bypassed altogether), then revolted, likely with the support of some of the Baktrian satraps and nobles, including a certain Arsakes. The latter made use of Skythian nomads to seize the satrapal capital of Baktra (ca. 248/7 BC) only to be driven out by Diodotos I who subsequently took the epithet *Soter* and who commemorated the event by placing a victory wreath on his coins. Arsakes, thus driven out of Baktria, fled to Parthia where a year or two later (ca. 246 BC)⁵³ he continued to stir up revolt against Diodotos I, turning what was initially a local Diodotid concern in Baktria into a problem for the Seleukids as well. Fortunately for Arsakes, Antiochos II had just died in 246 BC, and his successor Seleukos II was pre-occupied with two simultaneous wars against Ptolemy III and his brother Antiochos Hierax.⁵⁴ Diodotos I was thus left to face Arsakes and Diodotos II alone. Justin tells us that Diodotos I died at some point after 246 BC, perhaps in the 230s BC,⁵⁵ and

50 Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

51 Strab. *Geogr.* 11.9.3. For a discussion of the discrepancy in Strabo regarding the ethnicity of Arsakes I, cf. Lerner 1999, 13–14 and Sidky 2000, 149–50.

52 Jakobsson 2010, 22; cf. Grainger 1997 under *Laodike* 8.

53 See above with n. 28.

54 Just. *Epit.* 27.3.

55 I. e. shortly after the Battle of Ankyra, which has been dated around 239 BC traditionally, but which Coşkun, ca 2016a, now suggests to date to 246 BC, so that most of the Third Syrian War and the War of Brothers would have taken place simultaneously.

his elder son Diodotos II became king and immediately allied himself with his father's enemy Arsakes I.⁵⁶ This is unsurprising as Antiochos Nikator would have been a boy of between eight and ten years old when his father died.⁵⁷

Moreover, the reconstruction outlined above makes better sense of an otherwise enigmatic passage in Polybios in his account of the anabasis of Antiochos III into Baktria in ca. 212–10 BC. According to Polybios, when Antiochos III arrived in Baktria the Diodotids were no longer on the throne. Antiochos therefore laid siege to Euthydemos I, who was then ruling at Baktra, and after a two-year blockade, despairing of the outcome, decided to open negotiations. Polybios notes that Antiochos accused Euthydemos of being a rebel and adds:

For Euthydemos was himself from Magnesia, and he defended himself denying it to be just that Antiochos was eager to cast him out from his kingdom. *For he himself had not become a rebel to the king, but when others revolted, having risen against the descendants (ἐκγόνοις) of those men, he thus held the rule of the Baktrians ...*⁵⁸

Now if Diodotos I was not truly a rebel, as seems to be the case, then Antiochos' accusation seems incoherent. Since the only rebel was Diodotos II, Euthydemos' response – that he had overthrown the kinsmen (ἐκγόνοις) of a rebel – presupposes the existence of *another* Diodotid king. Fortunately Jakobsson has identified this kinsman in Antiochos Nikator, as the links between the late 'Antiochos' coins and the earliest issues of Euthydemos indicate.⁵⁹

If we are permitted to indulge in some speculation, there might even be some chronological grounds for accepting the proposed reconstruction. While there is considerable disagreement as to the length of the reign of Diodotos I,⁶⁰ a reign of about ten years is not unreasonable given the best estimates. If Diodotos I received the diadem in 250 BC, then he would have reigned until 240/39 BC. Antiochos Nikator would have been eight or nine years old at his father's death. The reign of Diodotos II is also thought to have lasted about ten years,⁶¹ which means that he was succeeded by Antiochos Nikator around 229 BC. This is potentially quite significant as the accession of Antiochos Nikator might then correspond with the attempt of Seleukos II to recover Parthia and Hyrkania from Arsakes.⁶² While

56 Just. *Epit.* 41.4.

57 Jakobsson 2010, 27.

58 Polyb. 11.34.

59 Jakobsson 2010, 25–8.

60 Narain 2003, 307 suggests a reign of eight years (256–248 BC); Mitchiner 1975, 41 suggests a reign of seventeen years (256–239 BC); Holt 1999, 97 ff. suggests a reign of between five and ten years starting around 250 BC; J. Jakobsson 2010, 27 provides a rather brief reign of six years from 256 to about 250 BC; Bopearacchi 1999, 41–6 refuses to distinguish between the coins of Diodotos I and II, but assigns a date for both kings of about 20 years from 250 to 230 BC. Lerner 1999, 33 suggests a reign of approximately nine to ten years, beginning in about 245 BC and ending shortly after 236 BC. Sidky 2000, 150–1 is rather vague, suggesting a reign that began in about 246 BC and lasted until 'sometime' after 237 BC.

61 Narain 2003, 308 suggests a reign of 13 years (248–235 BC); Mitchiner 1975, 33–44 suggests a reign of approximately nine years (239–230 BC); Holt 1999, 101–6 suggests a reign of approximately ten years (ca. 235–225 BC)

62 Cf. Coloru 2009, 159, n. 13 and Plischke 2014, 236–7.

Diodotos II was still alive, Seleukos II would, reasonably, have been reluctant to attempt to recapture lost territories in the upper satrapies due to the alliance between Diodotos II and Arsakes I. With the accession of the legitimate Seleukid vassal in Antiochos Nikator, however, Arsakes was without his powerful ally in Baktria and, therefore, an easier target for Seleukos II, who consequently marched against Arsakes in the same year (or very shortly after). Finally, if Jakobsson is correct when he assigns a reign of approximately fifteen years to Antiochos Nikator before he was overthrown by Euthydemos I,⁶³ then the end of Antiochos' reign at the hands of Euthydemos I would correspond chronologically with the anabasis of Antiochos III in the following year. This, too, is significant: as we have seen, Polybios has Antiochos III refer to Euthydemos I as a rebel, which is a meaningless reproach indeed if Baktria had been independent of the Seleukids for several generations. But if Euthydemos I had overthrown Antiochos Nikator as the numismatic evidence suggests, then he would have usurped power from the legitimate Seleukid vassal in Baktria. This chronological reconstruction is admittedly speculative, since the length of reign for Greco-Baktrian kings is based exclusively on coin finds and the dates for Arsakes' revolt in Parthia and Seleukos' II subsequent campaign to recover the region are far from certain. Nonetheless, our reconstructed chronology, though rough, results in too many coincidences to be dismissed out of hand.

Thus, when Antiochos Nikator had been overthrown by Euthydemos I, Antiochos III marched into Baktria to re-subjugate it. Finding the task impossible to achieve as Baktra seemed impregnable and Euthydemos was threatening to admit nomads from Central Asia into Baktria, Antiochos III decided to negotiate a settlement. Polybios describes the terms of settlement:

Finally Euthydemos sent out his son Demetrios to secure an agreement. The king ... *first promised to give to him one of his daughters*, then he permitted his father [i. e. Euthydemos] the name of king. Then having made an agreement and a sworn alliance, after abundantly distributing corn, he added to (his) power, taking the elephants that were with Euthydemos to his own.⁶⁴

The arrangements are reminiscent of the agreement of *epigameia* between Seleukos I and Chandragupta Maurya insofar as Antiochos III pursued the well-worn policy of securing suzerainty in the eastern satrapies with a dynastic marriage. The Seleukid women bestowed in marriage to these local magnates thus effectively maintained royal authority. Antiochos II recognized the royal title of Diodotos I because he was a son-in-law and through him the Seleukid king was able to exercise control, albeit indirectly, over Baktria. Similarly Seleukos II and Antiochos III recognized Antiochos Nikator's claim to the diadem in Baktria because his mother was a Seleukid princess. However, Diodotos II could boast no such connection, and consequently had to usurp the diadem with the assistance of the Parthian Arsakes I. Euthydemos I was similarly a rebel until his royal title was recognized by Antiochos III, and this only after Antiochos married off a daughter to Demetrios. Such marriage ties, then, conferred reciprocal political advantages for both the Seleukids and their eastern vassals. For the Seleukids they were the most effective way of consolidating their hold

63 Jakobsson 2010, 27.

64 Polyb. 11.34.

on their eastern frontier, while Seleukid marriage connections conferred political legitimacy on local dynasts and vouchsafed their local status and authority.

The kinship connections of the Euthydemids with the Seleukids might also provide the immediate context for understanding Euthydemid policy in post-Mauryan India. The Mauryan dynasty was thought to have collapsed in about 185 BC, overthrown by the Mauryan general Pusyamitra.⁶⁵ It is after this event that the abovementioned Demetrios I is said to have invaded India, an event perhaps suggested by the elephant scalp found on Demetrios' portrait on many of his coins.



Figure 5: Coin of Demetrios I with Obverse Bust Wearing Elephant Scalp.

Silver Tetradrachm, 16.82 g. Auctioned by Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 149, lot 275: Demetrios I. © With permission by Dr. Hubert Lanz.⁶⁶

Strabo identifies a certain Greco-Baktrian King Demetrios as one of a handful that extended Macedonian rule deeper into India than even Alexander himself.⁶⁷ The *Yuga Purana*, (a 3rd-century-AD Hindu text containing material going back to the 3rd century BC⁶⁸) notes how the Greeks (Sanskrit 'Yavanas') would invade the Ganges basin as far as Pataliputra and how India would prosper under the rule of a king 'Dhamamita'.⁶⁹ Tarn and others have argued⁷⁰ that this 'Dhamamita' or 'Dharmamita' is a transliteration of 'Demetrios'.⁷¹ Moreover, since Euthydemos I is assigned a reign of approximately thirty years,⁷² his son Demetrios I would have succeeded him around 185 BC, the very year in which Pusyamitra is thought to

65 Sircar 1963, 7. On the collapse of the Mauryan Empire see Thapar 2002, 204–8.

66 Cf. Bopearachchi 1991, 164–7, Démétrios I, série 1–3, 5. Demetrios with Elephant Scalp, Figure 6. Also see <http://coinindia.com/MIG0103c-Demetrios-20.02.jpg>.

67 Strab. *Geogr.* 11.11.1.

68 Mitchiner 1986, 81–2 and Sircar 1963, *passim* for general discussions of the chronology, manuscript traditions, and characteristics of this text.

69 *Yuga Purana*, 47, 56–8.

70 Tarn 1951, 178; Sircar 1963, 13.

71 Although Tarn's position has been aggressively attacked by Narain 2003, 48; 50; 310, the latter's objection rests upon his observation that certain Indian/Greek bilingual coins transliterated Demetrios' name as 'Demetriyasa'. More recently, Bopearachchi 1991, 99 has reassigned these coins to a different Demetrios (Demetrios III) who ruled at a much later date. See also p. 287, Démétrios (III) Anikétos série 1–3). However, since the *Yuga Purana* was set to writing long after many of the events it narrates, a modest corruption of a foreign name is not beyond the realm of possibility.

72 Narain 2003, 308 suggests a reign of ca. 235–200 BC; Mitchiner 1975, 45 suggests ca. 230–190

have overthrown Mauryan rule in western India. Pusyamitra's coup thus appears to be closely associated chronologically with the accession of Demetrios I and the Greek incursions into India referenced in Strabo and the *Yuga Purana*. The Mauryan house, like the Euthydemid house of Demetrios I, was tied to the Seleukids through a marriage alliance. When the Mauryans had been overthrown in 185 BC by a rogue general, it is entirely possible, if not probable, that Demetrios would have used this as a *casus belli* for an invasion of India,⁷³ however thinly veiled that excuse might have been. No doubt the reigning Seleukid king, Seleukos IV (187–175 BC), was content to allow Demetrios to recover India on his behalf. As an interesting side note to these events, it is worth mentioning that the *Yuga Purana* tantalizingly suggests that the invading Yavanas allied with certain Pāṣandas (heretics) 'for the motive of gaining women'.⁷⁴ The reference in the *Yuga Purana* to the Greco-Baktrian invaders seeking women thus suggests that Demetrios sought to continue the well tested policy of empire building through marriage alliances in India.

When the Euthydemids were eventually overthrown by Eukratides I around 170 BC, the new dynasty appears to have continued the practice of legitimizing its rule in Baktria by emphasizing its ties to the Seleukid house. Among the vast coinage that was minted under Eukratides is a set of commemorative medals sporting the image of Eukratides himself on the obverse with the legend 'Great King', while the reverse contains an jugate portrait of an older man and woman and the legend 'of Heliokles and Laodike'.



Figure 6: Coin of Eukratides I with Jugate Bust of Heliokles and Laodike on Reverse. Silver Tetradrachm, 16.30 g. Auctioned by Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Auction 236, lot 179: Eukratides I. © Lübke & Wiedemann, Stuttgart.⁷⁵

BC; Boppearachchi 1991, 47 suggests ca. 230–200 BC; Jakobsson 2010, 27 suggests a reign of ca. 225–195 BC.

⁷³ Cf. Tarn 1951, 152–4.

⁷⁴ *Yuga Purana*, 51. Trans. Mitchener 1986.

⁷⁵ Also see <http://coinindia.com/MIG182a-58.4.jpg>.

It is widely accepted that the legends ought to be read together as 'King Eukratides [Son] of Heliokles and Laodike'. Heliokles and Laodike are thus thought to have been the parents of Eukratides.⁷⁶ A closer look at the jugate portrait reveals that Heliokles is not diademed, but Laodike is. We take this to imply that Eukratides was claiming his right to the Baktrian throne through his mother's line.⁷⁷ Such a reading is not, of course, without its difficulties: first there is the unusual legend on the coin, as the name and title of Eukratides are in the nominative (instead of the more typical genitive) while the names of Laodike and Heliokles are in the expected genitive case. There is also the fact that, though it is Laodike who wears the diadem in the jugate portrait, she is presented second and it is the portrait of Heliokles that is prominent in the foreground.

As concerns the grammatical cases of both obverse and reverse legends, Hollis has noted that this peculiar arrangement was meant to imply that Eukratides is descended from Heliokles and Laodike and is in fact their son.⁷⁸ The minters no doubt wished to avoid the confusion that would ensue if both legends were in the genitive. This issue is, however, unique. Baktrian coins commemorating previous rulers such as those issued by Agathokles and Antimachos I have both the king being commemorated and the name and title of the issuing king in the genitive.⁷⁹ However, Agathokles and Antimachos are not attempting to represent filiation; they are simply commemorating the reigns of previous rulers in Baktria. As concerns the positioning of Heliokles and Laodike on the reverse of the coins, Katharina Martin admits that it is highly unusual for the diademed figure of a conjugate bust to be placed in the background, but also argues that the rather idiosyncratic positioning of Heliokles and Laodike is less important than the fact that it is Laodike who is diademed.⁸⁰ We cannot know what Eukratides had in mind with this unique numismatic design, but we might conjecture that he wished to advertise the fact that although he has started a new line of kings in Baktria, one that owed its paternity to Heliokles (a figure who must have been known in Baktria in his own right), this new line nonetheless derived its legitimacy through a connection to the previous dynasty on the distaff side, a claim rendered all the more important by the fact that he had seized power by overthrowing the Euthydemid line.⁸¹

That Eukratides' mother was a Seleukid princess has been suggested by Tarn and more recently by Hollis and by Martin,⁸² although there is little agreement as to who she might be. Tarn considers the Laodike on Eukratides' coins to be a daughter of Seleukos II and so an otherwise unattested sister of Antiochos III.⁸³ Hollis on the other hand contends that she is a daughter of Antiochos III, as per Polybios, likely

76 Tarn 1951, 196; cf. also A. S. Hollis 1996, 161 and Martin 2012, 414–15; Bopearachchi 1991, 209, *Eucratide I*, série 13–14.

77 Cf. Coloru 2009, 209–11.

78 Hollis 1996, 161.

79 Cf. Bopearachchi 1991, 177–80, *Agathocle* série 12–18 and 187, *Antimaque (I) Théos* série 9–10.

80 Martin 2012, 414–6.

81 Cf. Just. *Epit.* 41.6.

82 Tarn 1951, 196; Hollis 1996, 162; Martin 2012, 415.

83 Tarn 1951, 197.

the same daughter who was married to Antiochos Neos between 195 and 193 BC.⁸⁴ Tarn contends that this Laodike was remarried first to Seleukos IV and then to Antiochos IV.⁸⁵ However, Adrian Hollis⁸⁶ considers this unlikely and suggests that these latter two kings were in fact married to a different Laodike altogether.⁸⁷ For Hollis, this frees up Laodike to be married to Heliokles, the father of Eukratides, in about 193 BC, more or less immediately upon the death of Antiochos Neos.⁸⁸

But while Hollis' reconstruction remains plausible, there are some grounds for doubt. First, we might wonder why Antiochos III would marry off a daughter to one who was otherwise a commoner in the far-flung borders of the Seleukid dominions.⁸⁹ It would be far more likely that he should prefer a royal connection that would do much more to secure Seleukid suzerainty in Baktria. Omar Coloru proposes that the diademed Laodike is a sister of Euthydemus I.⁹⁰ While this remains plausible, it is derived primarily from the apparent age of Laodike on the portraits and is thus highly speculative. However, we do have textual evidence that such a connection was proffered by Antiochos III to Demetrios I. As mentioned, Polybios tells us that Antiochos agreed to raise the siege of Baktra in exchange for a marriage between Demetrios I, son of Euthydemos, and one of his daughters. The name Laodike certainly occurs with considerable frequency among the Seleukids and can thus be considered a truly dynastic name;⁹¹ that Antiochos III should have had more than one daughter named Laodike is therefore unremarkable. As it is a Laodike who bears the diadem in the commemorative medal of Eukratides and not Heliokles, and given also that it would have been unlikely for Antiochos III to have married off a daughter to a satrap of a vassal king rather than to someone in the royal family itself, and, finally, given that we have direct evidence from Polybios that Antiochos III offered a daughter to Demetrios I, we might surmise that the Laodike on Eukratides' coins is a daughter of Demetrios I and his Seleukid wife, and thus was a granddaughter of Antiochos III rather than a daughter.

Under the ordinary rules of nomenclature we might expect a daughter of Demetrios I and Laodike, if such was the name of his Seleukid wife, also to be named Laodike. Our hypothesis is certainly justifiable on chronological grounds; we know from our passage in Polybios that the proposed marriage alliance between Demetrios and Antiochos' daughter occurred around 210/9 BC, about fifteen years or so before Demetrios became king in Baktria. We can reasonably assume that Demetrios would have married Antiochos' daughter within a year or two after this proposal. If, as Polybios notes, he was *neaniskos* (i.e. about 18 or 20 years old) in 210/9 BC, then we can imagine an actual marriage with a certain Laodike in about 208/7 BC. If the first child of this marriage were a girl, we should expect her to be

84 Hollis 1996, 162–3.

85 Tarn 1951, 184–5.

86 Hollis 1996, 162–3.

87 Hollis 1996, 162–3.

88 Hollis 1996, 162.

89 Coloru 2009, 211.

90 Coloru 2009, 211.

91 Hollis 1996, 161.

called Laodike and this Laodike would certainly have been of marriage age by 15 or slightly later. She thus would have been married in about 193/2 BC to Heliokles, whom we might surmise to have been a satrap of Demetrios I, hence the marriage. Justin tells us that Eukratides took the Baktrian throne in a coup at about the same time that Mithridates I ascended the Parthian throne, an event commonly thought to have occurred in 171/0 BC, but which has more recently been put at 165 BC.⁹² Eukratides would then have been between twenty three and twenty eight years old when he seized power if we assume that he was born within a year or two after the marriage of Heliokles and our Euthydemid Laodike.

If our genealogy and chronology are correct, then we have strong circumstantial evidence that the marriage between Demetrios I and a certain Seleukid Laodike did in fact take place. Moreover, our reconstruction also suggests that the Euthydemids continued the well-worn policy of using marriage ties to cement control within Baktria, perhaps in imitation of the policy employed by their Seleukid overlords in the upper satrapies more broadly. Marriages to Seleukid women conferred royal legitimacy on eastern dynasts aspiring to royal status. That they did so suggests that the general view that Baktria was lost to the Seleukids with the accession of the Diodotids is incorrect. But more importantly, the great misfortune here is that we know so very little about these women, their personalities, and how active a role they took in local dynastic politics. Indeed, aside from one Laodike, we do not even have any names, at least none that are not (at this point) purely speculative. This was of course the great difficulty confronting Tarn's attempts at reconstructing a dynastic genealogy for the Greco-Baktrian kings. The lives of these women are thus likely beyond recovery for now. However, we can assume that they would not have been unaware of the considerable political clout they wielded. Tarn opined that the Seleukid women who were married into the Diodotid, Euthydemid, Eukratidid and Mauryan dynasties often ruled with remarkable results,⁹³ and while the specific details of their lives are lost, Tarn's remark must still hold true. The integrity of the eastern frontiers of the Seleukid Empire rested upon these very women.

92 Assar 2005, 41 f.; Grainger 1997, 72; cf. Just. *Epit.* 41.6.

93 Tarn 1951, 74.

‘THE HEROIC COMPANY OF MY FOREBEARS’: THE ANCESTOR GALLERIES OF ANTIOCHOS I OF KOMMAGENE AT NEMRUT DAĞI AND THE ROLE OF ROYAL WOMEN IN THE TRANSMISSION OF HELLENISTIC KINGSHIP

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ABSTRACT

From the conquests of Seleukos Nikator, Seleukid rulers presented themselves as heirs to the age-old Near Eastern ideal of universal monarchy. But since their power had started to decline in the 2nd century BC, new claims to ‘Great Kingship’ were made by the Parthian Arsakids, the Mithradatids of Pontos, the Ptolemies, and conspicuously by Antiochos I of Kommagene, whose house had been bound to the imperial centre by ties of intermarriage and kinship. The same Antiochos famously displayed his royal ancestors in the sanctuary on Nemrut Dağı. While such dynastic expressions are predominantly viewed as fictitious Persian revivalism, it will be argued that the idea of universal monarchy had always been pivotal to Seleukid rule and that with the demise of the Seleukid patriline new claims to empire were based on matrilineal descent. This was possible due to the importance of Seleukid women as transmitters of inheritance and royalty.

I. INTRODUCTION

From *c.* 70 to 36 BC, Antiochos I Theos ruled Kommagene, a kingdom located strategically between the Syrian plain and the highlands of Anatolia. Like so many regional rulers of the late Hellenistic period, his position was ambiguous. On the one hand, he was a scion of a Seleukid vassal dynasty in a time when the Seleukid Empire had ceased to exist. On the other, he was a ‘client king’ of Rome in a time when the Roman Empire in the Near East had not yet been established and the Parthian Empire may have seemed to many as the strongest power in the region.¹ He was, as he put it himself, simultaneously a *philhellēn* and a *philorhōmaios*.²

The sanctuary that Antiochos constructed on top of the mountain called Nemrut Dağı (Mount Nemrut) in the Taurus Mountains was quite literally the summit of a vast program aimed at transforming Kommagene into a sacred monarchical land-

1 For the history of the dynasty see Sullivan 1977 and Facella 2006. Antiochos was supported by Lucullus and Pompey, who extended his kingdom to include the strategic crossing of the Euphrates at Seleukeia-Zeugma. During the Roman Civil War, Antiochos supported Pompey, made an alliance with the Parthians, and nonetheless negotiated a favorable peace with Antony in 36 BC. This paper is concerned with the ideological implications of Nemrut Dağı, and not with reconstructing their connection to actual politics and warfare.

2 Lines 2–3 of the Nomos Inscription (see below).

scape dotted with reliefs, inscriptions and cult places.³ The desolate, wind-swept Mount Nemrut in the present-day province of Adıyaman in Turkey is the highest peak of this part of the Taurus Range. Here Antiochos built a conical tumulus that is visible everywhere in the surrounding landscape.⁴ He intended it to be his tomb. The word *hierotherseion* was invented for the sanctuary surrounding the tumulus on three artificial terraces (Figure 1).⁵ It was constructed ‘as close by the thrones of Heaven as possible, for my blissful body, having reached old age, to rest for all eternity when my god-beloved soul has been sent to the heavenly thrones of Zeus Oromasdes.’⁶ The lack of any hints at burnt offerings on the altars suggests that cultic activity never took place in the Hierotherseion on Mount Nemrut.⁷

Equally pretentious is Antiochos’ use of the title ‘Great King.’ With this title he presented himself as the senior ruler among the post-Seleukid dynasts in the western part of the former empire. But at first sight there seems to be not much difference between Antiochos of Kommagene and, say, a ruler like Tarkondimotos – a local big man from the Amanos Mountains whom the Romans accepted as king in 39.⁸ Why was the latter in our eyes just another post-Seleukid mountain king while the former has become an icon of modern Turkey who lives on as a cover-boy for tourist brochures and travel guides? Was Antiochos of Kommagene really no more than the Ancient World’s Ludwig II of Bavaria, a petty king who tried to compen-

- 3 For Antiochos’ building activities consult Facella 2006, 250–97. Waldmann 1973 has argued that Antiochos I continued a policy of ‘cult reforms’ begun by his father, Mithradates I Kallinikos; see now also Moormann & Versluys 2002, 100, adducing archaeological evidence in support of an older date for some of the reliefs and inscriptions: either Mithradates had already erected some kind of monument on Mount Nemrut in the late second century BC, or Antiochos transferred elements from a monument that his father had earlier built elsewhere.
- 4 For the choice of location see Jacobs 2002a.
- 5 The earliest description of the monument is Humann & Puchstein 1890. The most detailed account of its archaeology and epigraphy is the report of the American excavations edited by D.H. Sanders 1996; Moormann & Versluys 2002, 2003, and 2005 report on the restoration work and new archaeological research conducted by the University of Amsterdam in the early 2000s, examining for the first time also the immediate surroundings of the Hierotherseion. There were two other sanctuaries called *hierotheresia* in Kommagene: one at Arsameia-on-the-Euphrates and one at Arsameia-on-the-Nymphaios (Schipperheijn 2011, 24).
- 6 Lines 38–43 of the Nomos Inscription (see below). This image of the deified ruler enthroned in heaven is rooted in Hellenistic monarchical ideology, cf., e.g., Theokritos’ encomium for Ptolemy II Philadelphos (*Idyll* 17), evoking three thrones set up in the house of Zeus: one for Alexander, one for his ancestor Herakles, and one for the deified Ptolemy I Soter (lines 16–25). The presence of Herakles is significant: a mortal who became a thirteenth Olympian god in reward for his decisive role in the struggle between the gods and the infernal Giants, Herakles became a model for royal apotheoses because kings, too, claimed to protect, in the name of the gods, civilization, viz. cities, from chaos, viz. barbarians; cf. Strootman 2005; for a comprehensive overview of Herakles’ place in Hellenistic royal propaganda, see Huttner 1997. It is probably in part because of his role as a *sōtēr* who is both man and god that Herakles, an ancestor of Antiochos, figures prominently at Nemrut Dağı and on *dexiosis* stelae elsewhere in Kommagene.
- 7 The exact building dates are unknown; there is some consensus that work on Nemrut began about 50 BC; cf. Şahin 1991, 116–22; Jacobs 1998, 44–6; 2000, 303–5.
- 8 On this ruler see Sayar 2001; Wright 2008; Andrade 2011.

sate for his lack of power by means of an eccentric building program?⁹ Or was there more at stake?



Figure 1: The Tumulus and Statues of Enthroned Gods on the East Terrace of Mount Nemrut.
Author's photograph, 2008.

According to many, the shrine on Mount Nemrut is an example of ruler cult gone wild, lacking any real political significance or art historical relevance. The statues themselves seem to be no more than ‘giant garden gnomes’, as one of the participants of the Fourth Seleukid Study Day at Montréal described the famous colossal statues on the eastern and western terraces. In this article I will argue otherwise. The cultural style displayed at Mount Nemrut seems less idiosyncratic when seen in its own cultural context.¹⁰ The sweeping political claims made by Antiochos make sense when considered in their late Hellenistic political setting – particularly when viewed against the Seleukid backdrop. Universalistic pretensions, rather than being a revivalist claim of an otherwise petty monarch, had instead been a principal ingre-

9 A sensible version of this view was recently proposed by Gotter 2013, 219–23, who argues that the building program of Antiochos compensated for his lack of actual military prestige – previously the principal source of legitimacy and charisma of Hellenistic kings – and was aimed at preventing Roman intervention in the region by persuading polities in his direct environment from complaining against him before the Senate. I am grateful to Ann-Cathrin Harders for bringing this paper to my attention.

10 So Versluys forthcoming; cf. Kropp 2013.

dient of Seleukid imperial ideology. When the Seleukid dynasty lost its hegemonial power over the Middle East and Iran after 140, to disappear from the political scene entirely in the first century BC, there were several rulers who claimed the imperial title, among them Mithradates VI of Pontos, the Armenian ruler Tigranes the Great, Kleopatra VII, and, indeed, Antiochos Epiphanes of Kommagene. I argue that royal women played a role almost equal to their male counterparts in transmitting royal inheritance, most of all *basileia*. The earlier Seleukid policy of conducting marriage alliances with the dynasties of satellite states, especially in the Armenian/Iranian periphery of their empire, had created a web of kinship relations between these dynasties and the imperial family. This is most notably the case in the second century BC, when the Seleukid Empire had generally become a system of autonomous and semi-autonomous vassal kingdoms, and the imperial system was held together by the charisma of the legitimate Great King and the agency of royal women. It was only natural that after the disappearance of the Seleukid dynasty in the patriline, direct descendants in the matriline would stake a claim to the Seleukid inheritance as the main dynasty continued to fray. Presenting oneself as the legitimate Seleukid *basileus* was a powerful political tool, providing ancestral charisma strong enough to win over the cities of the east and rally support among local rulers. Antiochos Epiphanes, himself the son of a Seleukid princess, likely wanted to use his inherited charisma to unite all Armenian lands, and in the process may have been one of several rulers who sought to create a new ‘world empire’ on the foundations of the former Seleukid state.¹¹

II. THE FORTUNATE ROOTS OF ANCESTRY

Even though the Hierothesion on Mount Nemrut fell into disuse after Antiochos’ death, the far-reaching pretensions of Antiochos were passed on to his successors. His son Mithradates II also styled himself Great King, as did a later successor, Antiochos IV Epiphanes. Why did the kings of Kommagene think of themselves as extraordinary? A preliminary answer to this question is readily available on Mount Nemrut itself. In the long cultic inscription behind the colossal statues of enthroned gods (Figure 2), Antiochos of Kommagene explicitly states what made him special: his ‘fortunate roots’. He writes in lines 24–34 of this so-called Nomos Inscription:

After taking over my paternal dominion (*archē*) [...] I proclaimed that the kingdom (*basileia*) subject to my throne should be the common dwelling place of all the gods; and I decorated it with representations of their forms by all the kinds of art that the ancient traditions (*logos*) of Persians and Greeks – the fortunate roots of my ancestry – had handed down to me, and hono-

11 On the role of royal women in the ‘vassalization’ process of the Seleukid world see Strootman 2010 and 2011a; Engels 2011 and 2014a; McAuley 2011. On the Seleukid state as a Eurasian ‘world empire’ and its universalistic ideology see Strootman 2007, 251–248; 2014b, and forthcoming; Bang 2012b; Engels 2014b. The late Hellenistic web of inter-dynastic kinship relations is studied by Sullivan 1990.

red them with sacrifices and festivals in accordance with the original law (*nomos*) and common practice (*ethos*) of all mankind.¹²



Figure 2: Cultic Inscription on the West Terrace.
Author's photograph, 2008.

As is well known, ancestor cult takes pride of place on Nemrut Dağı. The Nomos Inscription links ‘the divine representations of the manifest deities consecrated on the holy hill’ directly to ‘the heroic company of my forebears, whom you behold before you’ (lines 45–53). This refers to the colossal statues of the gods (including the deified Antiochos Theos himself) and the two ancestor galleries on the East and West Terraces. On both terraces, two rows of stelae represent Antiochos’ *progonoi* in the male and female line, respectively (Figure 3). The first of these *Ahnengalerien* leads through Kommagenian kings and Armenian satraps back to the Achaimenid dynasty. The second consists of Seleukid kings and originates with Seleukos Nikator (stele 2) and ‘the Great King Alexander, son of King Philippos’ (stele 1).¹³

12 OGIS 383; RIG 735. Two slightly differing versions of the Nomos Inscription were placed on the East and West Terraces (Dörrie 1964, 29–34; Schipperheijn 2011, 32–7). The *editio princeps* was prepared by Otto Puchstein in 1883, and published in Humann & Puchstein 1890, 262–78 (with German translation); this quotation and translation after Schipperheijn 2011, 203–16, based on Puchstein’s reading of the somewhat better preserved text on the East Terrace; cf. p. 202 for a listing of previous editions and translations.

13 Young 1996, 322–6.

The second Ahnengalerie comprises several royal women. We will look at these ancestor galleries in more detail shortly.



Figure 3: Pedestals of the Seleukid Ancestor Gallery on the West Terrace.
Author's photograph, 2008.

Modern views of Nemrut Dağı usually see the male, Achaimenid line as the most significant. The female line is often viewed implicitly as being of secondary importance. Antiochos' self-presentation as 'Great King' in the opening of the Nomos Inscription is often considered as exclusively a reference to his Achaimenid ancestry.

But this view somehow seems to be wrong, as the Achaimenid and Seleukid lines are presented as equal on Mount Nemrut. The Nomos Inscription speaks of 'fortunate roots' that are both Persian *and* Hellenic. The gods honored in the Hierothesion are 'the ancestral gods of Persia, Macedonia, and Kommagene' (lines 224–226), viz. the syncretic deities Zeus-Oromasdes, Apollo-Mithras-Helios and Artagnes-Herakles-Ares. The patrilineal and matrilineal ancestor galleries are shaped symmetrically and show no hierarchy between them. In the opening lines of the Nomos Inscription (lines 1–7), Antiochos introduces himself in Hellenistic, rather than Achaimenid, formulary:

The Great King Antiochos Theos Dikaos Epiphanes, friend of the Romans and friend of the Greeks, the son of King Mithradates Kallinikos and Queen (*basilissa*) Laodike Thea Philadelphos, daughter of King Antiochos (VIII) Epiphanes Philometor Kallinikos.

How then can we account for the prominence of the Seleukids in this seemingly un-Greek sanctuary?

III. THE ANCESTOR GALLERIES

Before answering this question, let us first have a closer look at the ancestor galleries themselves. They both consist of a row of limestone stelae decorated with carved images of rulers on inscribed pedestals. A rectangular altar was placed before each of the ancestors. The galleries are similar on both terraces, only their placement is different because the West Terrace is smaller than the East Terrace.

The stelae are badly damaged and the inscriptions have suffered from the weather since their excavation.¹⁴ The identities of the kings in the Achaimenid line are best known, and this part of the Ahnengalerie originally comprised fifteen ancestors. From Darius the Great to Artaxerxes II there are five Achaimenid emperors, followed by three satraps and four kings of Armenia, and finally three rulers of Kommagene.¹⁵ The last in line is Mithradates I Kallinikos, the father of Antiochos I. In the following table, names in square brackets represent ancestors that have been restored with the help of other sources:

1. Darius I	Achaimenid king
2. [Xerxes I]	Achaimenid king
3. [Artaxerxes I]	Achaimenid king
4. Darius II	Achaimenid king
5. Artaxerxes II	Achaimenid king
6. Aroandas (= Orontes) I	satrap of Armenia
7. Aroandas (= Orontes) II	satrap of Armenia
8. [...]danes	satrap (?) of Armenia
9. [Ardoates]	king of Armenia
10. Samos	king of Armenia
11. Arsames	king of Armenia
12. [Orontes III?]	king of Armenia
13. Ptolemaios	dynast of Kommagene
14. Samos	dynast of Kommagene
15. Mithradates I Kallinikos	king of Kommagene

The whole line spans a period of about four centuries. Bonds of intermarriage and loyalty between the Persian rulers of Armenia and the Achaimenid Dynasty have

14 On the ancestor galleries, see generally Messerschmidt 2000; extremely valuable are the detailed descriptions by Young 1996, 254–306 (paternal ancestors), and 306–350 (maternal ancestors). On the present state of preservation, see Moormann & Versluys 2002, 83 (East Terrace) and 88–89 (West Terrace). I was unable to consult Jacobs 2002b.

15 For the identity and chronology of the Armenian and Kommagenian rulers see, Dörner 1996, 361–77; cf. Messerschmidt 2000, 38–41.

been attested elsewhere.¹⁶ Samos and Arsames (stelae 10 and 11) were Armenian kings under Seleukid tutelage who extended their dominion to include Kommagene, and (re)founded the cities of Samosata and Arsameia.¹⁷ The first Kommagenian ruler Ptolemaios constitutes the weakest link as regards the historicity of Antiochos' alleged Achaimenid ancestry. Diodoros (31.19a) reports that in 163/2 BC a Seleukid governor (*epistatēs*) of Kommagene, Ptolemaios, 'asserted his independence' (but did not in the process assume the title of king).¹⁸ Precisely how this governor-dynast was related to the Orontid Dynasty of Armenia remains unknown.

The Seleukid Ahnengalerie originally consisted on both terraces of seventeen (now badly-damaged) ancestor slabs. The best preserved is now in the Archaeological Museum of Adiyaman; it represents 'Seleukos' (IV) wearing military attire, with a Greek-style linen or metal cuirass, an elaborately decorated sash, and a sword (Figure 4).¹⁹

Various reconstructions of the Seleukid Ahnengalerie have been proposed. Below, I follow the succession of rulers suggested by Dörner.²⁰ According to him, the sequence of rulers does not represent a strictly chronological line from father to son, which allows him to include Antiochos IV Epiphanes in this restoration. The king is not really an ancestor of his namesake, the later king Antiochos Epiphanes of Kommagene. However, that Antiochos IV was a direct ancestor of the later Antiochos may have been suggested, or even believed, by those who created the Hierothesion, thus presenting an image of Seleukid history as harmonious rather than being plagued by dynastic strife between the descendants of Antiochos IV and those of his brother, Seleukos IV.²¹ The appearance of Alexander as an ancestor of the Seleukids likely reflects a genuine belief that had become current by the later

16 Messerschmidt 2000, 39. The marital link between the Orontid and Achaimenid houses is epigraphically attested through the name of Rhodogune, daughter of Artaxerxes II, on stele 6, dedicated to her husband, Orontes I; Rhodogune is the only female member of the Achaimenid Ahnengalerie, but in contrast to the Seleukid women she is not honored with a stele of her own; see Jacobs 2000, 300.

17 Dörner 1996, 367–8. On the historicity of this claim see Versluys forthcoming.

18 Diod. 31.19a. The name of Ptolemaios preceded by the title of *basileus* has been restored by Reinach (in 1890) in a lacunose inscription from Arsameia on the Euphrates; but this stele was erected by Antiochos I; in this inscription, Ptolemaios' successor Samos has the title of king, too (Facella 2005, 87–8). As is the case with other local monarchies, the genesis of the kingdom of Kommagene cannot be described in zero-sum terms of autonomy versus subjugation. The 'independence' and attempt at territorial expansion described by Diodoros took place during the upheavals following the death of Antiochos IV Epiphanes, but the country did not leave Seleukid suzerainty: after his supposed breakaway, Ptolemaios struck coins in the name of Demetrios I Nikator, and continued to do so when the pretender Alexandros Balas came to power in 150 BCE (Houghton, Hoover, Lorber 2008, 207), which suggests that he supported the rival line of Demetrios' sons and grandsons (Demetrios II, Antiochos VII and VIII), the line from which his successors later claimed descent.

19 Two more fragments showing torsos of kings have been found, likewise in military dress, as well as some fragments showing the heads of Seleukid kings wearing broad diadems, cf. figs. 511 and 515 in Sanders 1996, vol. II, pp. 254 and 256, and figs. 468–470 at p. 240.

20 Dörner 1967; cf. idem 1975 and 1996, 371–377. See Messerschmidt 2000, 41–3, for a comparison of alternative reconstructions.

21 For the genealogy of the Seleukids see the stemmata created by McAuley 2013.

second century BC, or even earlier.²² It was at this time at least possible to see him as the original creator of the empire that the Seleukids had ruled.



Figure 4: *The Representation of Seleukos (IV?) from the Western Terrace.*
Now in the Archaeological Museum of Adıyaman. Drawing by the author, 2013.

- 22 On Alexander's place in the Hierothesion see Young 1996, 322–6. Tarn 1929, 141, suggested that in the third century a legend came into being, according to which Seleukos' Iranian queen, Apama, had been Alexander's daughter; Young more plausibly believes that incorporation of Alexander into the Seleukid family tree '[must] belong to a later time' (p. 325); that would certainly be in accordance with the fact that Alexander, contrary to a widespread modern conviction, did not figure prominently in the imperial representation of the Hellenistic kings after 306/5; it was only in the latter half of the second century BC that Alexander became a point of reference for kingship in the Hellenistic *koinē*. In the *poleis* of the west, a pseudo-Argead lineage may be traceable as early as 260 BC (cf. esp. *OGIS* 222 and 223), as was suggested to me by Altay Coşkun.

1. Alexander the Great
2. Seleukos I Nikator
3. Antiochos I Soter
4. Antiochos II Theos
5. [Seleukos II Kallinikos]
6. [Seleukos III Soter]
7. [Antiochos III Megas]
8. [Seleukos IV Philopator]
9. [Antiochos IV Epiphanes?]
10. Demetrios I Soter
11. Demetrios II Nikator
12. [Antiochos VII Euergetes (Sidetes)]
13. Antiochos VIII Epiphanes (Grypos)
14. female ancestor
15. female ancestor
16. Isias Philostorgos
17. female ancestor

The epigraphic evidence indicates that the last four or five stelae were dedicated to female ancestors.²³ Antiochos' Seleukid mother, Laodike Thea Philadelphos, was likely among the women honored with a stele and an altar. The queen was a daughter of the Seleukid king Antiochos VIII Grypos, who in ca. 100 BC had married Antiochos' father, Mithradates I of Kommagene. The marriage of Laodike and Mithradates was extensively celebrated in Kommagenian royal propaganda, and perhaps prompted Mithradates' extensive cultic program that his son Antiochos I would continue.²⁴ With this marriage, Mithradates perhaps officially received the title of *basileus*: from the reign of Antiochos III the Great (223/2–187 BCE), the official granting or recognition of royal status to rulers of satellite states in the Seleukid Empire often went hand in hand with a dynastic marriage between the vassal king and a daughter (sometimes a sister) of the Seleukid king.²⁵ Mithradates perhaps took his father-in-law's best known cult title 'Kallinikos' upon this occasion to stress his newly acquired marital bonds with the imperial family.²⁶

The identity of the other royal women cannot be reconstructed with any certainty. Only one name has been preserved: Isias Philostorgos (stele 16 on the Western Terrace). Exactly how she fits into the genealogy is unknown, but the altar before her stele suggests that she predeceased Antiochos.²⁷ Dörner has suggested that she was a Seleukid princess and the mother of Mithradates I Kallinikos, viz. Antiochos' paternal grandmother.²⁸ He reconstructs the identities of the individuals

23 Also Fischer 1972; Jacobs 2000; Messerschmidt 2000.

24 See note 3, above.

25 Strootman 2010 and 2011; cf. Engels 2011. Also see McAuley and Wenghofer in this volume.

26 Sullivan 1990, 60–1; on the varying epithets of Hellenistic kings see now Muccioli 2013.

27 ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑΝ ΙΣΙΑΔΑ / [ΦΙΛΟΣΤΟ]ΡΓΟΝ (Jacobs 2000, 301–303).

28 Dörner 1967; Waldmann 1973, 56. If Dörner is correct, Isias Philostorgos may have been a daughter of Demetrios II or Antiochos VII.

honored with altars or stelae 14–17 as follows: (14) Kleopatra Thea, the mother of Antiochos Grypos and a great-grandmother of Antiochos of Kommagene; (15) Kleopatra Tryphaina, the wife of Antiochos Grypos and our Antiochos' maternal grandmother; (16) Isias Philostorgos, his paternal grandmother, and finally (17) Antiochos' Seleukid mother, Laodike Thea.²⁹ Bruno Jacobs later proposed an alternative sequence: (14) Antiochos' grandmother, Kleopatra Tryphaina; (15) his mother Laodike Thea; (16) his wife Isias Philostorgos; and (17) a daughter of Antiochos and Laodike, perhaps Laodike II who married the Parthian king Orodes II.³⁰ Here, the presence of Antiochos' wife and daughter can be explained by assuming that they had already died before the reign of Antiochos.

What is remarkable in both reconstructions is the fact that, while the Achaimenid Ahnengalerie comprises male rulers only (and the *name* of one woman on her husband's stele), the Seleukid Ahnengalerie presents not only the matriline, but, in all likelihood, comprised about 25 % of royal women.

IV. MACEDONIAN ROYAL WOMEN AND THE TRANSMISSION OF KINGSHIP

Why were these Seleukid women deemed so important that an entire Ahnengalerie was devoted to the *progonoi* of Antiochos' mother Laodike, and that, apart from Laodike, another three or four of them may have been included in this gallery? It must surely indicate that, in the eyes of Antiochos and his contemporaries, royalty could be transmitted via female offspring as well as their male counterparts. Indeed, there is ample evidence that in the Makedonian dynasties of the Hellenistic world daughters were also entitled to the inheritance. The Makedonian kingdoms were no constitutional states but dynastic organizations; in this the later Antigonid, Ptolemaic and Seleukid dynasties were not fundamentally different from the Argeads.³¹ *Basileia* (monarchy) was a family affair.³² When there were no male heirs, the family's *basileia* would normally be inherited by a direct female descendant, viz, a king's eldest daughter, rather than a more distantly-related male cognate.³³ Of

29 Dörner 1996, 371–7. Kleopatra Thea and Kleopatra Tryphaina were the daughters of Ptolemaic kings, but through Antiochos III's daughter Kleopatra I they themselves also descended from the Seleukid house.

30 Jacobs 2000, 303–6.

31 Strootman 2007, 101–3. The absence of constitutional rules for the succession did not mean that legitimacy did not count 'in the face of the political reality', *pace* Mitchell 2007, 73. If anything, the violent upheavals after the death of Alexander make clear how difficult it was even for the alleged 'Machiavellian' Diadochs to overcome established cultural patterns of behavior.

32 Carney 2000, 4–8; see Mitchell 2007, 62–3, for an outline of the 'constitutional'-versus-'traditional' debate on the Argead system of succession.

33 Strootman 2002; 2007, 108–111. This hypothesis finds support in the fact that the title *basilissa*, as Carney 2011 has shown, was variously applied to royal wives, daughters of kings, and female regents; *basilissa*, she argues, should therefore be translated as 'royal woman' rather than as 'queen' (p. 202).

course, succession could be an *ad-hoc* adaptation to diverse political circumstances by individual kings, queens, and princes. But the exceptional power of royal women in the Hellenistic empires, broadly speaking, could well have been partly the result of property transmission customs which were peculiar to the Macedonian dynasties.³⁴ This did not necessarily mean that daughters were actually entitled to rule on their own, without a royal husband or son at their side. But it does mean that the sons of inheriting daughters were entitled to become ruling monarchs.

Kleopatra, 'the sister of Alexander', is an early case in point. Several Diadochs tried to marry her,³⁵ but to say that they did so simply because such a marriage would 'legitimize' their own power or strengthen their position, as historians sometimes put, is far too imprecise. They did so because their *sons* by her would be the legitimate heirs of Philip II; by marrying Kleopatra, *basileia* would be introduced into their own households, albeit one generation later. The seniority of the father over the son would ensure that the former could become regent if his son succeeded to the throne as a minor, as was not uncommon in the Macedonian dynasties – or the queen-mother would become regent, but in that case, too, the husband would be able to exert influence on the minor king.³⁶ This chapter is not the ideal forum in which to explore if this was an ancient Macedonian convention or a tradition invented in the time of the Diadochs, as so many ancient Macedonian traditions regarding kingship were.³⁷ Regardless, though, it did give Kleopatra, and several other royal women after her the opportunity to openly assume an active role in the dynastic politics of the age. Philip II's daughter Thessalonike performed a similar role in bringing the Argead *basileia* into the Antipatrid family through her marriage to Kassandros in 315 BC. Ptolemaic sibling marriage may be in part explained from a desire to maintain a unified inheritance and to prevent the royal title from leaving the household.³⁸

The evident importance of female agnates in transmitting the Seleukid inheritance after the fall of the dynasty shows that this principle was kept alive in the Seleukid context, too. Antiochos of Kommagene was not the only late Hellenistic ruler to make claims based on Seleukid descent in the matriline. As we will see below, the political situation in the Near East in the first century BC was similar to the situation after the deaths of the last male Argeads, Philip III and Alexander IV (and Herakles) in the late fourth century BC.

34 On the various sources of female power, specifically in the Seleukid household, see Nourse 2002.

35 See especially Meeus 2009.

36 The principle of the father's 'natural' seniority over the son (adult sons included) is one of several mechanisms that in actual practice mitigated the lack of hierarchy between wives and successors, and the ensuing 'amphimetric strife', suggested by Ogden 1999; for a discussion of Ogden's theory and the strategies employed by Hellenistic royal households to preclude amphimetric strife see Strootman 2007, 118–119.

37 Cf., e.g., Carney 1991, showing that the title of *basilissa* was in fact an early Hellenistic invention, post-dating Philip and Alexander. See also Harders in this volume.

38 Strootman 2007, 112; cf. Ogden 1999, who explains the custom as an attempt to annul the danger of amphimetric dispute. See Huebner 2007 for a good discussion of different interpretations of brother-sister marriages in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.

Recognition of the critical role of women in the transmission of kingship in the Makedonian dynasties of the Hellenistic Age leaves one question unanswered: why was this type of legitimization so important for Antiochos of Kommagene? Why emphasize his Seleukid legacy if he already had inherited the royal title legitimately from his father, Mithradates I Kallinikos? He apparently could boast an Achaimenid bloodline, too, fictional or not. In short: what was the ideological bonus of a Seleukid ancestry that Antiochos on the face of it did not really need?

V. UNIVERSALISM AND EMPIRE

As we now understand better than in the past, the title of *basileus* that the Diadochs assumed in 306–305 BCE had a universalistic connotation. Not only Antigonos and Demetrios, but Ptolemy, Seleukos, and Lysimachos were likewise imperialists who claimed and fought for supremacy – not for a ‘balance of power’ or hegemony in a multi-state system.³⁹ The Seleukids were relatively the most successful out of all their contemporaries in this endeavour. More so than the Ptolemies and the later Antigonids, the Seleukids could successfully claim to be the imperial overlords in a Middle East that had for centuries become accustomed to the idea that the world ideally was a single empire under a single imperial ruler – even if not all of them explicitly employed the title of Great King, and Greek historiography did not call them Great Kings as systematically as it did with the Achaimenids. But some of them *are* known to have actually used that title (Antiochos I in Babylon, Antiochos III in the Greek cities), while others used the comparable title King of Asia (Seleukos II, Antiochos IV) or the epithet *Megas*, ‘Great’ (Antiochos III and Antiochos VII). All these titles carried with them basically the same universalistic pretensions.⁴⁰

To interpret Seleukid universalism as a continuation of Achaimenid imperial ideology would be misleading and facile. Doing so would imply that the Seleukids themselves thought of their monarchy as a continuation of the Achaimenid Empire. There is, however, not a scratch of evidence supporting the notion that they propagated themselves as the new Achaimenids in their heyday. On the contrary, despite their cooperation with other (non-Persid) Iranian noble families, the Seleukids in their propaganda rather seem to have distanced themselves from their Achaimenid predecessors to the point of a virtual *damnatio memoriae*. This changed however during the course of the second century BC, when local rulers of alleged Iranian

39 This is an important outcome of the international conference ‘The Age of the Successors’, held in Leuven in 2008, the proceedings of which have been published in Hauben & Meeus 2013. Doubts regarding the conventional view that only Antigonos and Demetrios aspired after the whole of Alexander’s empire while the other Diadochs had more realistic, limited aims had already been expressed by Ager 2003, 49.

40 For the imperial titulature of the Seleukid monarchy see Engels 2014b and Strootman forthcoming, with further literature on the title of Great King/King of Kings in the Ancient Near East.

stock like the *fratarakā* of Persis or the Arsakids of Parthia instigated a kind of ‘Persian revival’, just as the first-century kings of Kommagene later did, too.⁴¹

The title ‘Great King’ was, like ‘King of Kings’, not typically Achaimenid. Neither was the ideal of the unity of the *oikoumenē* a Greek or Roman concept – it was not the product of Stoic philosophy or the idealism of Alexander the Great, as some have claimed.⁴² In the Middle East, the ideal of universal empire had deep roots, going back to the third millennium BC. From the Neo-Assyrian Empire onwards, this ideal had become a political reality, something that rulers not merely claimed but actually sought to accomplish through territorial expansion. It was a pivotal element in the ideologies and policies of the Ptolemies and Seleukids as well, and the Roman notion of *imperium sine fine* was evidently a borrowing from the (Hellenistic) east⁴³. Universalism, moreover, is a defining aspect of most pre-modern land empires, from China to the Americas.⁴⁴ It was a well-trying instrument of imperial rule, a unifying ideology to bind together the heterogeneous polities and cultures of which empires are typically composed.⁴⁵ In Late Antiquity imperial universalism inspired, and was reinforced by, universalist tendencies in Christianity and Islam. In the Middle East, the universal ideal endured as the core concept of imperialist ideology until the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. In short, it must have *worked*.

VI. UNIVERSAL EMPIRE AFTER THE SELEUKIDS

From about 250 BC onwards, the Seleukid Empire gradually transformed into a hegemonial power loosely uniting a growing number of autonomous vassal states and small princedoms around a more or less directly controlled imperial core consisting of Mesopotamia, Media and Northern Syria. But the process of vassalization had in fact begun already under Antiochos I Soter. The most prolific king-maker, however, was Antiochos III – hence presumably the pronunciation of his status of Great King in Greek civic epigraphy and his Greek title of *Megas*, ‘the Great’.⁴⁶ In

41 I hope to return to this aspect of Seleukid ideology in a paper given at the conference ‘Building a new world order: Hellenistic monarchies and the ancient Mediterranean world’, at Penn State University, April 24–25; see for now Strootman 2011b; 2013; cf. Tuplin 2008. On the ‘Persianism’ of the later Hellenistic dynasties see Versluys forthcoming and Strootman & Versluys forthcoming; cf. Curtis 2007.

42 Most famously, Tarn 1933, and most extensively, Marks 1985, who defends the view that the ‘ecumenical ideal’ (p. 69) was first introduced by Alexander the Great, and by way of the Stoic philosophy of the Hellenistic Greek *poleis* was transmitted to Christianity.

43 Strootman 2014b

44 Bosbach 1985; Sinopoli 1994; Pagden 1995; Bang 2011, 2012a; Strootman 2014a.

45 For the integrative function of universality in general, see Bang 2011, 173, and specifically for the late Hellenistic/early Roman Near East, Strootman 2010; on internal political diversity as a defining aspect of imperial states, cf. Sinopoli 1994, 159 (‘composed of a diversity of localized communities and ethnic groups’) and Howe 2002, 15 (‘Diversity is their essence’).

46 Already Spranger 1958, cf. Engels 2014a, providing a detailed account of Antiochos III’s activities as ‘kingmaker’. The chronology and subtleties of Antiochos’ *megas* titulature are exam-

return for their acceptance of imperial suzerainty, local rulers such as the rulers of the Parni tribes, the *fratarakā* of Persis, or the sub-kings of Baktria, legitimately received the title of *basileus*. It usually was a response to increased autonomy, but that was not necessarily a sign of weakness on the part of the Seleukid Empire. The bonds between the imperial 'clan' and the various vassal dynasties were often cemented by dynastic marriage, which potentially could create strong bonds of loyalty. Particularly in Anatolia, kinship ties came into existence between the Seleukids and the dynastic houses especially of Kappadokia, Pontos, and Armenia through (repeated) intermarriage. The rulers of Kommagene apparently joined the club of Seleukid vassal monarchs under the dynast Ptolemaios somewhere in the 150s BC and received the title of *basileus* at the latest around 100 BC with the wedding of Mithradates I Kallinikos and Laodike Thea Philadelphos. In the power vacuum following the disappearance of the Seleukids, Antiochos of Kommagene may actually have played his part in taking over the Seleukids' role as the protectors of cities,⁴⁷ and, in accordance with this role, claimed deification as savior and benefactor.

In the first century BC, the Seleukid family was no longer able to uphold its claim to imperial rule. In 96, Laodike's father Antiochos VIII Grypos was assassinated, and in the following years what then remained of the Seleukid Empire was torn apart by wars of succession, finally collapsing under the pressure of Parthian, Armenian and Nabataean expansion. A mere three decades after Grypos' death, the Seleukid Dynasty had disappeared from the political scene. Various powers competed for supremacy in the former Seleukid realm and for control of its various vassal kingdoms and city states, particularly the Romans – who turned Kilikia and Syria into provinces in c. 101 and 64/3 BC – and the Parthians. But not everyone accepted Parthian claims to overlordship. Particularly in the Mediterranean regions of the Middle East, others claimed the title of 'Great King.' Among these we can count Mithradates Eupator of Pontos, who could boast Seleukid ancestry in the matriline, Tigranes the Great of Armenia, and Kleopatra VII.⁴⁸

ined by Ma 2000. For the wider implications of the vassalization process in the Seleukid Empire, see Engels 2011.

47 As *i. a.* Antiochos' neighbor Tarkondimotos did in Kilikia, see Andrade 2011.

48 Mithradates VI emphasized in his propaganda his descent from Antiochos VII Dionysos, see Erciyas 2005, 179. It indeed seems as if the Near East was suddenly teeming with claimants to the status of imperial overlord in the period of political insecurity between the collapse of the Seleukid Empire and the establishment of Roman hegemony in the later first century BC. What is striking about these claims, is that they all seem to be connected in some way or other with the Seleukid Dynasty. This was most obviously the case with the last Ptolemaic ruler, Kleopatra VII. In the so-called 'Donations of Alexandria', Kleopatra, encouraged by the rulers of Rome and in defiance of the Parthian Arsakids, claimed dominion over an empire stretching from the Bosphorus to India by claiming to be the principal heir to the *basileia* of both her Seleukid and Ptolemaic forebears (Cass. Dio 49.40.2–41.3; Plut. *Ant.* 54.3–6; cf. Schrapel 1996; Strootman 2010). The principle aim most likely was (a) to give coherence to the nascent Roman Near East, and (b) to generate support for Antony's planned conquest of Babylonia and perhaps the Upper Satrapies. Through Kleopatra, the children of Caesar (Ptolemy XV 'Caesarion') and Antony (Alexandros Helios, Kleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy) would inherit the merged *basileia* of Seleukids and Ptolemies.

VII. THE GREAT KINGS OF KOMMAGENE

What is the relevance of all this for Antiochos I and the Hierothesion on Nemrut Dağı? To answer this question, we must return to lines 24–34 of the Nomos Inscription, with which we have begun our investigation:

After taking over my paternal dominion (*archē*) [...] I proclaimed that the kingdom (*basileia*) subject to my throne should be the common dwelling place of all the gods; and I decorated it with representations of their forms by all the kinds of art that the ancient traditions (*logos*) of Persians and Greeks – the fortunate roots of my ancestry – had handed down to me, and honored them with sacrifices and festivals in accordance with the original law (*nomos*) and common practice (*ethos*) of all mankind.

Several pronouncements made by Antiochos, here and elsewhere in the Nomos Inscription, can be classified as universalistic. Antiochos associates his kingship with the worship of *all the gods* and declares that Kommagene will be their ‘common dwelling place’. Specifically, Nemrut Dağı will be ‘the common sacred seat of all the gods’ (lines 45–46); in the Hierothesion on Mount Nemrut, they are to be honored with statues, sacrifices and festivals “in accordance with primeval divine law and the common practice of *all mankind*” (lines 32–34: ὡς ἀρχαῖοις τε νόμος καὶ κοινὸν ἀνθρώπων ἔθος).⁴⁹ Moreover, in the very first line of the inscription Antiochos uses the imperial title ‘Great King’ (*basileus megas*) without restraint.

While universalistic pretensions may be characteristic of the great Oriental empires, they are not typically found in small kingdoms, regardless of how strategically located they may be. Antiochos himself was well aware of the distinction. This is evident from his use of the words *archē* and *basileia* in the same sentence (lines 24–34). The Greek *basileia* denotes either ‘kingship’ or ‘kingdom’, but, in all probability, the latter was meant here, viz. the ‘all-nourishing paternal land of Kommagene’ mentioned in lines 56–57. The noun *archē* (meaning ‘sovereignty’ or ‘leadership’) is commonly used in Greek historiography as the equivalent of what we would now call an ‘empire’.⁵⁰ Antiochos did not proclaim himself Great King of this ancestral *archē* because of the extent of his kingdom or his overwhelming military triumphs. Neither was it an empty boast to compensate for lack of real power in the face of Roman might. We should not forget, however, that with the Seleukid Empire gone, the earlier attempts at empire by Mithradates and Tigranes failed, and Roman influence not yet crystallized, the mid-first century BC was still an age of political uncertainty – and with this uncertainty came opportunity. It is only with hindsight that the establishment of Roman power in the East seems inevitable. Various other possible scenarios existed at the time: successful Parthian expansion to the Mediterranean, for instance, or the creation of a new ‘Hellenistic’ empire on the ruins of the Seleukid kingdom.⁵¹

49 Compare the presence of ‘representations of every god or demigod or hero accepted by mankind’ (Polyb. 30.25.13–14) in the imperial procession of Antiochos IV Epiphanes at Daphne in the 160s BC.

50 Cf. e. g. Hdt. 1.91; Thuc. 4.128; App., *Mac.* 10.9.1, *Mithr.* 17.115.

51 In fact, the single reference in word or image to Rome that we find on Nemrut Dağı is the epithet *philorhōmaios* in the Nomos Inscription (line 3). Like its counterpart *philhellen* (line 2),

Antiochos claimed to have inherited imperial status through his ‘fortunate’ ancestry. It seems that in this ancestry the Seleukid line of descent was more important than the Achaimenid. This is apparent from the fact that Antiochos I, against the prevailing tradition of naming the first-born son after the paternal grandfather,⁵² was instead named after his *maternal* grandfather Antiochos VIII (Grypos) Kallinikos. This is indicated by the preference for Seleukid dynastic names (Antiochos, Laodike, Antiochis) and cult titles (Epiphanes, Kallinikos) among his descendants; and by his use of the Greek language (and not Armenian or Aramean, let alone Old-Persian) and hence also the *Greek* imperial title, *basileus megas*. Achaimenid names are absent in the house of Kommagene from the reigns of Mithradates I and Antiochos I onward.⁵³ The three principal ‘ancestral gods’ honored on Mount Nemrut, Zeus-Oromasdes and his sons Apollo-Mithras and Artagnes-Herakles, are to be connected, first of all, with Antiochos’ matrilineal *progonoi*: Apollo as tutelary deity and ancestor of the Seleukid house, and Herakles as the forebear of the Argead house of Macedon, from which Antiochos claimed descent through Alexander the Great. The deliberate creation of syncretic deities continued a well-established Seleukid policy.⁵⁴

As direct matrilineal descendants of the vanished imperial house, Antiochos of Kommagene and *his* successors could legitimately claim the imperial title. The last king of Kommagene to style himself ‘Great King’ was Antiochos IV Epiphanes (38–72 CE), a client of the Romans whose territory was extended by Caligula to include Kappadokia and Kilikia. This later ruler emphasized his ‘fortunate roots’ by striking bronze coins with an image of the Seleukid anchor on the reverse and by adopting the title of ‘Great King’.⁵⁵ Vespasian deposed him in 72 CE. His grandson, the Athenian magistrate and Roman senator Gaius Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappos, even though he was no reigning monarch, still held the title of *basileus*.⁵⁶ He died in 116 CE. His extraordinary grave monument on the Hill of the Muses in Athens, which bore a deliberate likeness to the Hierothesion on Nemrut

this was a Hellenistic concept aimed at an eastern audience, emphasizing perhaps Antiochos’ ability to keep the Romans away from Kommagene by maintaining friendly relations with them, see Ferrary 1988, 501; cf. Coşkun 2008. On the significance of *philorhōmaios* in the dynastic propaganda of Antiochos see the forthcoming monograph on Nemrut Dağı by M. J. Versluys, to whom I owe this reference. See further the recent discussion of *philorhōmaios* from a Roman perspective by Facella 2005; on the compatibility of *philorhōmaios* and *philhellen* see also Heinen 2008.

52 Strootman 2014a, 99–100.

53 Mithradates, the throne name of two reigning kings of Kommagene, is not an Achaimenid dynastic name but the Greek rendering of the *contemporaneous* Iranian name Mihrdād; in fact, the name Mithradates figures also among the Seleukids, who frequently intermarried with northern Iranian dynasties: see Mittag 2006, 34–6, on the possibility that Antiochos IV’s birth name was, after his maternal grandfather, Mithradates, with all previous literature.

54 Dirven 1997b; Erickson & Wright 2011; Erickson 2011.

55 According to Jos. *BJ* 5.11.3, this king’s son and co-regent, also named Antiochos Epiphanes, supported Titus during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, storming the city walls with an elite contingent of ‘Macedonians’: presumably soldiers armed and trained in the ‘Macedonian’, viz. Seleukid, fashion, who may have cultivated a Macedonian cultural identity.

56 *IG* II² 3112 and 3451; Plut. *Mor.* 628a.

Dağı,⁵⁷ shows him flanked by marble statues of Antiochos Epiphanes, the last reigning king of Kommagene, and Seleukos Nikator, founder of the Seleukid royal house. Clearly, the dynasty of Kommagene considered itself the successor to, or perhaps even a continuation of, the Seleukid Dynasty.

VIII. ACHAIMENID NEMRUT DAĞI: PERSIAN OR PERSIANISTIC?

For Antiochos I to claim the imperial title, Seleukid descent would have sufficed. The Kommagenian kings' claim to that ancestry was strongest and the Seleukids would have been better remembered than the Achaimenids – in fact, the perception of Persian culture on Mount Nemrut is in itself evidence that almost three centuries after their disappearance the Achaimenids had been all but forgotten: the central place of the Achaimenids in the Hierothesion, including the Nomos Inscription, can be sharply contrasted with the fact that nothing on Nemrut Dağı actually looks Persian. It is true that there are various Iranian, viz. Armenian, influences – for instance in the royal attire of Antiochos (Figure 5) – but 'Greek' forms, ideas and language are predominant.⁵⁸ The Hierothesion, after all, is primarily a shrine for a Hellenistic-style ruler cult, constructed too early to display significant Roman influence and far too late to imitate real continuity with the Achaimenid period. In other words, the 'Persian' cultural memory created on Mount Nemrut is suggestive of an 'invention of tradition' which can perhaps be better understood in a contemporaneous 'Hellenistic' context.⁵⁹

Scholars studying Nemrut Dağı often take the historicity of the Achaimenid link for granted, while they have trouble understanding, or outright ignore, the Seleukid presence. It is however the Achaimenid 'cultural scenario' that is the most difficult to understand. How can we explain the invention of a Persian past in a Hellenistic setting, indeed, in a Seleukid or even post-Seleukid context, with images and rhetoric that are supposedly 'Persian', but have nothing to do with Persepolis or Behistun? What we see at Nemrut is not really the syncretism of a Greek and Persian *past*, but the first-century BC *present*. As Matthew Canepa noted, the true context of Antiochos' dynastic imagery was 'the Middle Iranian religious

57 Judeich 1931, 388–9. On this monument, see further Kleiner 1985.

58 The (head)dress worn by Antiochos was derived from contemporaneous Armenian royal attire, cf. Young 1964 and Metzler 2000. On some of his coins, too, Antiochos wears an Armenian-style tiara; cf. Gariboldi 2007, arguing that this was meant to propagate his Orontid-Achaimenid descent.

59 Thus already Millar 1987, 125; cf. Versluys 2012, 63, suggesting that the 'ethnic invention' at Nemrut Dağı and elsewhere in Kommagene may be understood as a conscious attempt at ethnogenesis. For the concept of 'cultural memory', see Assmann 1992/2012.



*Figure 5: Colossal Head of the Deified Antiochos I Wearing an Armenian Tiara.
West Terrace of Mount Nemrut. Author's photograph, 2008.*

and artistic world rather than Achaimenid religion.⁶⁰ What we see is not Persian but *Persianistic*.⁶¹

Antiochos' pronunciation of the title 'Great King' may belong to the political situation following the fall of the 'King of Kings' Tigranes the Great of Armenia. For all we know, Antiochos may really have been staking a claim to the great kingship of Armenian lands – a more realistic, short-term political aspiration than the reconstruction of the Seleukid Empire in its entirety, but also a first step in that direction. Presenting oneself as the legitimate Seleukid *basileus* had in the past proved to be a powerful political tool, providing ancestral charisma that was potent enough to win over the cities of the east and rally support among local rulers.⁶²

IX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Achaimenid *Ahnengalerie* in the Hierothesion on Mount Nemrut presented Antiochos' alleged ancestors in the patriline and consisted of male rulers only; the Seleukid *Ahnengalerie* on the other hand presented not just Antiochos' maternal line of descent, but in all likelihood included up to four or five royal women on a total of seventeen ancestors. Modern scholarship tends to see the Achaimenid line as more important (or more interesting) than the Seleukid line. But, on Nemrut Dağı, the paternal and maternal *progonoi* are presented as equally important. Indeed, there are indications that Antiochos and his descendants valued their Seleukid ancestry more than their Achaimenid.

The Seleukid monarchy always had universalistic pretensions. Notably from the reign of Antiochos the Great, Seleukid rulers had united under their aegis a conglomerate of lesser kings and dynasts. The 'secondary' royal women of the Seleukid house had been instrumental in the creation of this vassal state system. When the main line of the Seleukid family lost most of its power and prestige to the victorious Parthians in the 140s and 130s, this was experienced in the post-Seleukid West as a power vacuum. Western vassal dynasties now claimed the Seleukid inheritance through the female line. They could do so, because in the Makedonian empires of the Hellenistic Near East both sons and daughters were entitled to the inheritance: when there were no male heirs, the dynastic royal title could be transmitted through a king's daughter.

What was at stake was the imperial title – the *status*, if not the name, of 'Great King'. Antiochos I and his successors claimed imperial status in their monarchical

60 In *BMCR* 2007–01, 21; compare Panaino 2007, rightly emphasizing that in Antiochos' self-presentation 'Hellenistic' elements sometimes were *Iranianized*. Jacobs 2003 argued that the apparent cultural hybridity of Antiochos' building program followed from the mixed Greco-Oriental ethnic identity of the population of his kingdom; but as Versluys 2012, 45, noted, we know nothing about the population of Kommagene in this period apart from what is suggested by Antiochos' building program.

61 Post-Achaimenid Persianistic style will be extensively treated in the forthcoming volume *Persianism in Antiquity* edited by M.J. Versluys and myself.

62 See, e.g., Just. 38.10.5–6; cf. Strootman forthcoming.

representation because of their Seleukid descent through the matriline. The more puzzling question, yet to be addressed, is not what the Seleukids are doing on Nemrut Dağı, but why the Achaimenids had to be ‘reinvented’ to reinforce pretensions that could already claim a high degree of dynastic legitimacy.

A DYNASTY WITHOUT WOMEN? THE HASMONEANS BETWEEN JEWISH TRADITIONS AND HELLENISTIC INFLUENCE

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ABSTRACT

Information about the female members of the Hasmonean dynasty prior to Salome Alexandra's accession to the throne in 76 BC is scarce, and the typical assumption has been that women did not play a prominent role in the political frameworks of Hasmonean Judea. However, a closer look at the evidence reveals that the wives or widows of recent rulers became increasingly important not only in the public representations of the dynasty, but also in political deliberations and power struggles at the court. Two Hasmonean rulers, John Hyrkanos and Alexander Jannaios, appointed their wives as successors even though they had eligible sons, and after the death of Aristoboulos, it was his widow Salina Alexandra who assumed power and established Alexander Jannaios on the throne. Yet key texts on the early history of the dynasty such as *1 Maccabees* almost completely ignore its female members. This paucity of information is not accidental but presents a narrative strategy employed in one particular strand of Hasmonean propaganda. The deliberate silence regarding female members of the dynasty here serves as a marker of distinction between the Hasmoneans and the neighboring Hellenistic empires of the Ptolemies and Seleukids and their prominent female protagonists.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 76 BCE, Salome Alexandra acceded to the throne of Judea after her husband Alexander Jannaios, on his deathbed, appointed her as his successor even though the royal couple had two adult sons formally eligible for kingship. After the surprising decision of the dying king, Salome Alexandra became the first and only Jewish queen to legitimately rule over Judea in her own right,¹ and she has justly attracted

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1 Jos. *AJ* 13.400–32, *BJ* 1.107–19. Flavius Josephus provides only her Greek name, Alexandra. Rabbinic sources name her Shelamtzo/Shelamtzi/Shelmatza (שלמטזו/שלמצי/שלמטה) or use similar derivations. Contemporary documents from Qumran confirm that her correct Hebrew name was Shelamzion (שלמציין); cf. Ilan 1993, 185–6, Ilan 2006, 52–6, 259–61. The only other ruling Judean queen was Athaliah (c. 841–835 BC). However, she is attributed with having introduced the cult of Baal to Israel, and her rule is considered illegitimate in the biblical tradition. *2Kings* 11.1–20, *2Chron* 22.10–23.21, cf. also Jos. *AJ* 9.140–58.

some interest in modern scholarship.² Considerably less attention has been given to Hasmonean women before the reign of Salome Alexandra. This is unsurprising, given that the available primary sources almost completely ignore the female members of the dynasty in its early period. However, a close analysis of the evidence suggests that the female members of the dynasty played an important role in Hasmonean Judea. This paper attempts to put Salome Alexandra in context by focusing on the role of Hasmonean women prior to her rule, arguing that although the queen's accession to power was an exception, her career nevertheless fits well into the general development of the dynasty and the role attributed to, and assumed by, its female members.

The history of the first three generations of Hasmonean rulers is of particular importance in the context of a volume on the role of women in the Seleukid dynasty. On the one hand, the Hasmoneans owed their power, status, and legitimacy to armed resistance first against the ban of the Jewish religion issued by Antiochos IV in 168 BC, then against imperial rule in general. On the other hand, it was the Seleukid Alexander Balas who appointed Jonathan as the first Hasmonean high priest and local ruler of Judea.³ The emerging Hasmonean state retained many features of Seleukid administration (and of its Ptolemaic predecessor); both the Ptolemies and Seleukids provided the Hasmoneans with models of dynastic rule in their political organization, propaganda, and representation. It is within this context that we should reconstruct, analyze, and understand the formation and representation of the new Judean dynasty and the features they chose to adopt, adapt, or reject.

II. WOMEN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MACCABEAN/HASMONEAN RULE

Almost nothing is known about the female members of the Maccabean family before Simon, the last of the Maccabean brothers, assumed power in 142 BC. The *First Book of Maccabees*⁴ as our main primary source does not give any informa-

2 Cf. especially Zeitlin 1960; Ilan 1993; Ilan 2001, esp. ch. 3; Baltrusch 2001; Lambers-Petry 2003; Ilan 2006, esp. ch. 1, 2, and 8; Liebowitz 2011. See also recent studies on the Hasmonean dynasty in general by Dabrowa (2010, esp. pp. 94–97), Regev (2013, esp. ch. 4 and 6), and Rappaport (2013, esp. pp. 349–53).

3 *IMacc* 10.18–21; *Jos. AJ* 13.45–46, for the change in Maccabean politics under Jonathan, see Sievers 1990, 81–6; Wilker 2011, esp. 230–3.

4 *I Maccabees* was most probably written during the rule of John Hyrkanos (135–104 BC). The reference to the funerary monument erected by Simon in Modein after the death of Jonathan in c. 142 BC ending with the phrase “remains to this day” (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης, *IMacc* 13.30) suggests a date around 120 BC or later; cf., for instance, Schunck 1980, 292; Sievers 1990, 3; Eckhardt 2013, 13–4 (around 110 BC). S. Schwartz (1991, 36–8) proposes a first version written around 130 BC that was updated later around 100 BC. Several scholars have interpreted *IMacc* 16.23–4 as a reference to the death of John Hyrkanos and have thus argued for a later date; these scholars include Goldstein 1976, 62–4 (written under Alexander Jannaios) and Nickelsburg 1981, 117 (between 104 and 63 BC). However, since Hellenistic kingship is presented in a negative light throughout the text, and the Romans are praised for their non-monarchic constitution in *IMacc* 8.14, the text was most probably written before Aristoboulos' as-

tion about the mother of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers; the same applies to any sisters, if they ever existed. Flavius Josephus, whose account in the *Jewish Antiquities* from the beginnings of the revolt up to the time of Simon relies mostly on *1 Maccabees*,⁵ does not add any information on the earliest female Hasmoneans. Only in *2 Maccabees* do we read about Judas getting married during a brief interim of peace,⁶ but the text does not provide additional information about the identity of his wife, whether they had any children, and what happened to her when military conflict broke out again shortly afterwards. There are several children recorded for Jonathan, who succeeded Judas as leader of the movement in 161 BC. When Jonathan was taken captive in 143/142 BC by the Seleukid impostor Diodotos Tryphon, his brother Simon had two of his nephews sent as hostages to Akko, though their subsequent fate remains unclear.⁷ Josephus also proudly states in his *Vita* that he was a descendant of a daughter of Jonathan, information that he chose not to include in his historiographical accounts of Jonathan's rule.⁸

sumption of kingship in 104/103 BC. The Hebrew *Urversion* of *1 Maccabees* was still known during the time of Origenes (Euseb. *Hist.Eccl.* 6.25.2); in his *Prologus Galeatus*, Hieronymus refers to the "*Machabaeorum primum librum Hebraicum reperi*". The textual parallels between Josephus' account in the *Jewish Antiquities* and the Greek text of *1 Maccabees*, however, suggest that Josephus used the Greek version; cf. the synopsis provided by Sievers 2001. For a summary of the relevant debates, see *inter alia*, Williams 2001, esp. pp. 173–4; Eckhardt 2013, 13–5.

- 5 Josephus does not seem to have used *1 Maccabees* when he wrote his *Jewish War*. In the later *Jewish Antiquities* he relied heavily on *1 Maccabees* but also used additional material to complement its account. For Josephus' use of *1 Maccabees*, his derivations and possible other sources, see Cohen 1979, 44–7; Gafni 1989; Feldman 1994, 42–3.
- 6 *2Macc* 14.25. In his commentary on *2 Maccabees*, Daniel Schwartz rightly points out that the passage seeks to underline the good relations temporarily reached between Nikanor and Judas, but he also mentions that the marriage was a reasonable action for Judas at this point. Given that any children of Judas would be considered main rivals of Simon and his own sons, an equally feasible assumption is that *1 Maccabees* disregards this marriage on purpose, D. Schwartz 2008, 482. The author of *1 Maccabees* was also uninterested in highlighting the friendly relations between Judas and Nikanor, cf. Sievers 1990, 66. In his commentary on *2 Maccabees*, R. Doran (2012, 274) assumes that Judas probably concluded a "politically advantageous marriage to one of the leading priestly families," but this is mere speculation. He rightly stresses that Judas died within a year after this marriage (*IMacc* 9.18).
- 7 *IMacc* 13.16–9; Jos. *AJ* 13.204–6. According to the *Vulgate*, the sons of Jonathan, who were given as hostages to Tryphon, were also killed (*IMacc* 13.23V), but this is presumably based on probability only, cf. Dancy 1959, 173; Goldstein, 1976, 76 no. 65, 474. Because *1 Maccabees* focuses especially on the heroization and glorification of Simon, and therefore (implicitly) the legitimacy of his son and successor John Hyrkanos, the anonymous author was uninterested in dwelling on the fate of Jonathan's sons. Simon probably benefitted from the removal of two potential rivals, cf. Sievers 1990, 105; Geiger 2002, 2.
- 8 Jos. *Vita* 2–4, cf. *AJ* 16.187. Several problems can be identified in the chronology provided in Josephus' account in the *Vita*. Doubts against the historicity of Josephus' Hasmonean descent have been raised by Schürer et al. 1973 vol. I, 45–6 with no. 3 (arguing that the high priest mentioned by Josephus as one of his ancestors was, in fact, Alexander Jannaios); Cohen 1979, 107–8 with no. 33; Krieger 1994, and others. These doubts have been refuted by Rajak 1983, 15–20; Fuks 1996, 166; Mason 2000, comm. ad vita 2. Aside from Josephus' confusing account of his family tree in *Vita* 2–4, it has been frequently noted that Josephus mentions his Hasmonean

It is during the account on Simon's rule that *1 Maccabees* refers explicitly, for the first and only time, to a female member of the family, albeit in the briefest way possible. After Simon had established himself as high priest and ruler of Judea in c. 142 BC, *1 Maccabees* gives the following account:

And Simon sent and took the bones of Jonathan his brother and buried him in Modein, the city of his fathers. And all of Israel mourned for him with great mourning and grieved for him for many days. And Simon built upon the grave of his father and of his brothers and made it highly visible with hewn stone on the back and on the front. He also set up seven pyramids, each one opposite from another, for his father and his mother and his four brothers. For them [the pyramids] he devised mechanisms, setting large pillars around them, and he placed suits of armor on the pillars for an everlasting name and beside the suits of armor carved ships to be seen by all those who sail the sea. This tomb, which he made in Modein, remains to this day.⁹

No archaeological remains of the monument have been clearly identified as yet, but Josephus confirms most of the features mentioned in the passage quoted above, including the seven pyramids.¹⁰ Both primary sources, *1 Maccabees* and Josephus,

ancestry only in the *Jewish Antiquities*, thereby provoking speculations on whether he either had been unaware of this family relation at the time he wrote his *Jewish War* or his descent was a later invention; see, for instance, Cohen 1979, 236 (learned about his Hasmonean ancestry only when he wrote the *Jewish Antiquities*); Smith 1999, 225–6; most recently Tuval 2013, 15. However, Josephus may have regarded referring to his ancestry in his earlier works as inappropriate for political reasons. A complete invention of such a distinguished family tree appears as highly improbable even at a later date in the 90s AD and in a diaspora setting.

- 9 *1Macc* 13.25–30 (Translation G.T. Zervos): Καὶ ἀπέστειλε Σίμων καὶ ἔλαβε τὰ ὅσα Ἰωναθου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθαψεν αὐτὰ ἐν Μωδεὶν πόλει τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐκόψαντο αὐτὸν πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ κοπετὸν μέγαν καὶ ἐπένθησαν αὐτὸν ἡμέρας πολλάς. καὶ ὠκοδόμησε Σίμων ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὕψωσεν αὐτὸν τῇ ὀράσει λίθῳ ξεστῷ ἐκ τῶν ὀπισθεν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν. καὶ ἔστησεν ἐπ' αὐτὰ ἐπτὰ πυραμίδας, μίαν κατέναντι τῆς μᾶς τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀδελφοῖς. καὶ ταύταις ἐποίησε μηχανήματα περιθεῖς στύλους μεγάλους καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐπὶ τοῖς στύλοις πανοπλίας εἰς ὄνομα αἰώνιον καὶ παρὰ ταῖς πανοπλίαις πλοῖα ἐπιγεγλυμμένα εἰς τὸ θεωρεῖσθαι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν πλεόντων τὴν θάλασσαν. οὗτος ὁ τάφος, ὃν ἐποίησεν ἐν Μωδεὶν, ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. Mattathias (*1Macc* 2.69–70) and Judas (*1Macc* 9.18–20) had already been buried at Modein during the war against the Seleukids. That the Maccabees had a traditional family grave suggests that they belonged to the (local) elite in pre-revolt Judea, cf. Bartlett 1973, 181–2; cf. in general also S. Schwartz 1993.
- 10 Jos. *AJ* 13.211–3; Josephus leaves out the military trophies and naval adornments and mentions additional porticoes instead. He also omits the highly unrealistic statement made by *1 Maccabees* that the monument could be seen from the sea, cf. Fine 2001, 7. That Josephus does not refer to the military trophies might indicate that these had been removed at some point in the two centuries between the erection of the monument and the time of Josephus, cf. Sievers 1990, 108–9 with reference to Jos. *AJ* 15.276–9, where trophies erected by Herod are interpreted as pagan symbols by some of his Jewish subjects. According to Euseb. *Onomastikon* (ed. Klostermann) 132, the monument was still visible and known during his time (unless we assume that Eusebius freely adopted the reference to its existence from *1 Maccabees* and Josephus. His language, however, differs significantly from that of both works; thus, there is no reason to doubt his report); see also Jer. *De situ e nominibus locorum hebraicarum* PL 23.958; Modein and the tomb are also mentioned on the Madaba Map. For the tomb and its possible reconstruction see Fine 2001, esp. 3–8. The individual features of the monument cannot be discussed here in further detail. The actual architectural reconstruction

present the burial as an act of fraternal piety, but Simon's actions exceeded the appropriate practices of mourning for a dear family member. The building of such an elaborate funerary monument at the traditional burial place of the family sent a strong dynastic message, thereby presenting the Hasmoneans as united even in death. The stylistic and decorative elements that are recognized as common to Hellenistic aristocratic and royal representation¹¹ underlined the elevated status of the family and emphasized their legitimacy as rulers.¹² *I Maccabees* indicates that Simon intended to honor his father and his brothers, but mentions his mother only in the actual description of the monument. The architectural composition, however, attributes a more central role to her because she is given the same attention, representative features, and honor as her husband and heroic sons.¹³ This is the only instance in which the mother of the Maccabees is mentioned in *I Maccabees*; her whereabouts during the war, the time and circumstances of her passing, and her initial burial are unexplored. Nevertheless, in spite of the general focus on male members of the family, Simon honored and presented her as an eminent and crucial part of the new dynasty. At least posthumously, the wife of Mattathias and mother of the Maccabees was thus the first of the Hasmonean women to assume some importance in the context of dynastic propaganda.

III. THE DAUGHTER OF SIMON

Simon is also the third of the brothers who we can surmise was married. His marriage is not explicitly stated in *I Maccabees* (nor in Josephus' account), but has to be inferred from the text that mentions his sons Judas, Mattathias, and John Hyrkanos;¹⁴ the text also refers indirectly to at least one daughter. Given that all three sons already assumed some administrative and military responsibilities and that the daughter was married by the time of Simon's death in 135 BC, his own

of the monument is unclear, but pyramidal structures were also used to embellish the Tomb of Jason in Jerusalem (west to the ancient city) and the Tomb of Zechariah in the Qidron valley on the Western slope of the Mount of Olives; both tombs date back to the late second/early first century BC; cf. Waywall and Berlin 2007, 56. For the possible identification of the ruins at Horbat Ha-Gardi with the Tomb of the Maccabees see the archaeological report by Amit Re'em 2011. Re'em also provides a summary of previous scholarship.

11 Cf. Sievers 1990, 107; Fine 2001, 3–4; Waywall and Berlin 2007, 56.

12 Sievers (1990, 107) rightly stresses that Simon's decision to bury Jonathan in Modein instead of Jerusalem further underlines the significance of the dynasty and its origins.

13 The number of the pyramids suggests that Simon planned this to be his own burial spot as well, cf. Dancy 1959, 173–4; Goldstein 1976, 474; Bartlett 1973, 182; Sievers 1990, 108. Nothing is known about Simon's burial (or about the burial of his wife and his two sons who were murdered together with him, see below). Another unclear issue is where the sons of Jonathan, assuming that they had been killed together with their father (see above no. 7), were buried. Simon's son and successor John Hyrkanos was not buried in Modein but near Jerusalem. His tomb (μνημείον) is mentioned several times as major landmark by Josephus, *BJ* 5.259, 304, 356, 468, 6.169.

14 A fourth brother is mentioned in *AJ* 13.247, although nothing else is known about him. This may be an error in Josephus' account.

marriage can be deduced as dating to at least the 150s BC. Similar to Jonathan (and maybe Judas), Simon thus founded a family in the midst of ongoing conflict with the Seleukid Empire before Jerusalem and Judea had been brought firmly under Hasmonean control.

Beside his mother, honored in the family mausoleum in Modein, Simon's daughter is the only other Hasmonean woman implicitly referred to in *1 Maccabees*, although the text only hints at her existence by mentioning Simon's son-in-law, Ptolemy, the son of Aboubos. Ptolemy served as local commander (*strategos*) in the region of Jericho, and when Simon and two of his sons visited his province on an official tour around the country, he held a banquet in their honor. As soon as they were all intoxicated, he ordered his men to kill Simon and his sons Judas and Mattathias.¹⁵ According to *1 Maccabees*, Ptolemy intended to establish himself as ruler over Judea and had planned this scheme well in advance. He not only contacted other Hasmonean commanders (*chiliarchoi*) across Judea to solicit their support,¹⁶ but also sent messengers to the Seleukid king Antiochos VII Sidetes, promising loyalty and alliance.¹⁷ Ultimately, the plot failed. Simon's third son, John Hyrkanos, who was commander of Gazara during that period,¹⁸ was warned just in time to elude the assassins sent by his treacherous brother-in-law. His subsequent succession to high priesthood constitutes the end of the narrative of *1 Maccabees*.¹⁹

The story of Simon's death is crucial to our understanding of the early Hasmonean period in various aspects, but in this context, the most important element is the unspoken daughter of Simon. The woman is not mentioned in the text and thus discerning whether she was present at the scene or even involved in the plot against her father is impossible. The passage nevertheless allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the role of women in the early days of the dynasty. Although we know nothing about Ptolemy's biography, his background or his family, we can undoubtedly establish that he was a member of the Judean aristocracy.²⁰ His wealth is explicitly stated in the text,²¹ he was sufficiently connected with other high-ranking members of the administration,²² and he had contacts at the Seleukid

15 *IMacc* 16.11–7.

16 *IMacc* 16.19.

17 *IMacc* 16.18.

18 John is mentioned for the first time in *IMacc* 13.53, which states that Simon put him in command of all forces. In *IMacc* 16.2 Judas and John are referred to as the two elder sons of Simon. For John taking residence in Gazara, see *IMacc* 13.53, 16.1, 19, 21. Cf. Dabrowa 2010, 61.

19 *IMacc* 16.22–4.

20 Regev 2013, 125. Mendels (2013, 128) maintains that Ptolemy was a "foreigner" but does not discuss this issue further. The name of Ptolemy's father, Aboubos, probably goes back to the Semitic name Habub (cf. Goldstein 1976, 524; Bartlett 1973, 212; Sievers 1990, 131). Ptolemy's important position within the new Hasmonean administration and his connections with the Judean aristocracy suggest that he, if not his family, had been longstanding supporters of the Hasmonean cause.

21 *IMacc* 16.11, 19. Based on *IMacc* 16.11, Dabrowa 2010, 61 assumes that part of the Hasmonean treasury was kept in Jericho and thus under Ptolemy's command.

22 Cf. *IMacc* 16.19. Ptolemy's attempt to overthrow the Hasmoneans hints at tensions among the Judean elite. However, neither *1 Maccabees* nor Josephus' accounts (see below) refer to any support for Ptolemy among the elite and/or the people of Judea, Dabrowa 2010, 67. Furthermore,

court from whom he could solicit support for his treacherous plot.²³ The marriage between Ptolemy and Simon's daughter hints at a Hasmonean marital strategy at this formative stage of the dynasty, that is, to foster and strengthen the ties and loyalty between the ruling family and the local aristocracy. The fact that Ptolemy served as *strategos* of the important region of Jericho shows that Simon sought to concentrate power and control within the family.²⁴ Although *1 Maccabees* does not reveal any details about the life of Simon's daughter, her marriage highlights one of the crucial roles ascribed to female members of the emerging Hasmonean dynasty: they were supposed to pave the way for an alliance with the Judean aristocracy and guarantee its loyalty through strategic marriages. This notwithstanding, the attempt, in this particular case, met with fatal failure.

IV. THE WIFE OF SIMON

The story of Simon's violent death at the hand of his son-in-law gains even further importance if we compare the account of *1 Maccabees* with the version provided by Josephus. In the *Jewish Antiquities* (as well as in the shorter account of the *Jewish War*) not only Simon and his sons fall prey to Ptolemy's ambitions, but Simon's wife is also present at the scene. According to Josephus, however, only Simon was killed on the spot, whereas his wife and two sons were taken prisoners. Ptolemy then intended to establish himself as ruler in Jerusalem but was denied this opportunity by the population who remained loyal to the Hasmoneans and John Hyrkanos. As Ptolemy then retired to his fortress Doq, Josephus' story unfolds the dramatic potential of Hyrkanos' assault in its entirety:

But [John] Hyrkanos (...) marched out against Ptolemy and attacked his stronghold; and though in all other respects he was superior to him, in one thing he was at a disadvantage, that is, in feeling pity for his mother and brothers. For Ptolemy had brought them up on to the wall and maltreated them in the sight of all, threatening to hurl them down headlong if Hyrkanos did not give up the siege. And so, reflecting that the more he slackened his efforts to capture the place, the greater was the kindness he would show to those dearest to him by sparing them suffering, Hyrkanos relaxed his eagerness. His mother, however, stretched out her hands, beseeching him not to weaken on her account, but to give way to his anger so much the more and made every effort to take the place and get his foe into his power and avenge those dearest to him. For, she said, it would be pleasant for her to die in torment if the enemy, who was doing these things to them, paid the penalty for his crimes against them. Now when his mother said these things, Hyrkanos was seized with a powerful desire to capture the fortress, but when he saw her being beaten and torn apart, he became unnerved and was overcome with compassion at the way in which the mother was being treated. But while the siege was being protracted in this manner, there came round the year in which the Jews are wont to remain inactive, for they observe this custom every seventh year, just as on the seventh day. And Ptolemy, being relieved from war

the plot was disclosed by one of Ptolemy's men, who warned John Hyrkanos of the attack before the assassins could reach him, *1Macc* 16.21; cf. Bartlett 1973, 213.

23 *1Macc* 16.18. Cf. Mendels 2013, 103.

24 As noted above, the other important region of Gazara was given to Simon's son, John Hyrkanos, *1Macc* 13.53, 16.1.

for this reason, killed the brothers and mother of Hyrkanos, and after doing so, fled to Zenon, surnamed Kotylas, who was ruler of the city of Philadelphia.²⁵

In this version of the story, Simon's wife is not only present at the scene, but she assumes a central, even dominant, role. John Hyrkanos' brothers are victimized and suffer silently, whereas his mother is presented in a heroic fashion: she encourages her son to stand firm and repeatedly expresses her own readiness to die. John Hyrkanos, as the male Hasmonean in charge, hesitates and is torn between rage and commiseration, whereas she is the unmistakable heroine willing to sacrifice her own life (and the lives of her two captive sons) for the Hasmonean cause. After its narrative climax of the mother being tortured on the walls of Doq, however, the story ends rather abruptly: John Hyrkanos withdraws from the siege because of the Sabbath year, Ptolemy has Simon's widow and her two other sons executed, and he safely escapes across the Jordan to Philadelphia.²⁶

In its dramatic effects, general character, and ideological message, the story told by Josephus strikingly resembles popular second and early first century BC legends and novels that feature Jewish heroines standing strong in the face of the enemy, and encouraging their sons and husbands to do so as well.²⁷ However, John Hyrkanos, as the next Hasmonean ruler, is not represented in the heroic fashion

25 Josephus, *AJ* 13.230–5 (Translation R. Marcus): 'Υρκανὸς (...) ἐπὶ τὸν Πτολεμαῖον ἐξεστράτευσεν, καὶ προσβαλὼν τῷ χωρίῳ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις περιῆν αὐτοῦ, ἡττάτο δὲ μόνῳ τῷ πρὸς τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς οἴκτῳ. τούτους γὰρ Πτολεμαῖος ἀναγαγὼν ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος ἐξ ἀπόπτου ἠκίζετο καὶ κατακρημνίσειν οὐκ ἀφισταμένου τῆς πολιορκίας ἠπειλεῖ. ὁ δ' ὅσον [ἂν] ἐνδοίῃ τῆς περὶ τὴν αἵρεσιν τοῦ χωρίου σπουδῆς, τοσοῦτο χαρίζεσθαι τοῖς φιλάτοις ἡγούμενος πρὸς τὸ μὴ κακῶς πάσχειν, ἐξέλυε τὸ πρόθυμον. ἡ μὲντοι μήτηρ ὀρέγουσα τὰς χεῖρας ἰκέτευε μὴ μαλακίζεσθαι δι' αὐτήν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ πλεον ὀργῇ χρώμενον ἐλεῖν σπουδάσαι τὸ χωρίον καὶ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ὑπ' αὐτῷ ποιήσαντα τιμωρῆσαι τοῖς φιλάτοις: ἡδὺν γὰρ αὐτῇ τὸν μετ' αἰκίας [εἶναι] θάνατον, εἰ δίκην ὑπόσχοι τῆς εἰς αὐτοὺς παρανομίας ὃ ταῦτα ποιῶν πολέμος. τὸν δὲ Ὑρκανὸν ταῦτα μὲν λεγούσης τῆς μητρὸς ὀρμὴ τις ἐλάμβανεν πρὸς τὴν αἵρεσιν τοῦ φρουρίου, ἡνίκα δ' αὐτήν ἰδοι τυπτομένην καὶ σπαρattoμένην, ἐξελύετο καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰς τὴν μητέρα πραττομένοις συμπαθείας ἦττων γίνετο. ἐλκομένης δ' οὕτως εἰς χρόνον τῆς πολιορκίας ἐνίσταται τὸ ἔτος ἐκεῖνο, καθ' ὃ συμβαίνει τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀργεῖν: κατὰ δὲ ἐπτά ἔτη τοῦτο παρατηροῦσιν, ὡς ἐν ταῖς ἑβδομάσιν ἡμέραις. καὶ Πτολεμαῖος, ὑπὸ ταύτης ἀνεθείς τοῦ πολέμου τῆς αἰτίας ἀποκτείνει τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοῦ Ὑρκανοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοῦτο δρᾶσας πρὸς Ζήνωνα φεύγει τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Κοτυλάν, τυρνανεύοντα τῆς Φιλαδελφείων πόλεως. The shorter account in *BJ* 1.57–9 mostly agrees with the version given in the *Jewish Antiquities*. They differ, however, in their explanations of the motive of the Jerusalem population, who, according to the *Jewish War*, supported John Hyrkanos given their remembrance of his father, in the *Jewish Antiquities* because of his own good deeds. Likewise, according to the *Jewish War*, the people of Jerusalem hated Ptolemy because of the crimes he had committed; the *Jewish Antiquities* states only that Ptolemy was hated by the people. Cf. Sievers 1990, 131.

26 Jos. *AJ* 13.234–5, *BJ* 1.60. Cf. Eshel 2010, 72–4.

27 Most prominently, of course, the story of the mother of the seven martyrs in *2Macc* 7. Other contemporaneous stories with female heroines include *Judith*, Greek *Esther*, and *Susanna*. Tal Ilan proposed that *Judith*, *Susanna*, and Greek *Esther* were all published in the time of Salome Alexandra to promote the image and idea of a Jewish queen, Ilan 2001, ch. 4. However, neither Esther nor Judith are depicted governing or assuming power permanently but they only inter-

expected from a story fabricated and publicized through official propaganda.²⁸ The John Hyrkanos in Josephus' account acts swiftly, he is unanimously greeted and supported by the populace of Jerusalem but then shies away from attacking and prosecuting the murderer of his family, thereby leaving the crime unpunished. In addition, neither the names of Simon's wife nor those of her unlucky sons are provided in the text, as one would expect from a source of historiographical character or aspirations. At the center of the story, instead, are the drama of the situation and the moral message carried by the mother's willingness to die. A fair assumption, therefore, is that the story of the brave and heroic death of Simon's wife is neither Josephus' fabrication, nor did he copy such account from an unknown Hasmonean historiographical report of official or semi-official character. Instead, Josephus deliberately adhered to a popular tradition that was well-known in his time and integrated the narrative into his account of Simon's death, even though it deviates from the authoritative report in *1 Maccabees*.²⁹

Whether the story of the martyrdom of Simon's wife and her death at the hand of her own son-in-law has a kernel of truth is impossible to discern. Josephus' narrative, with Ptolemy first attempting to conquer Jerusalem and only taking advantage of his hostages after his forced retreat back to Doq, seems less plausible than the account presented in *1 Maccabees*, in which the action focuses only on the desert fortress. If we follow the general dating of sabbatical years in the Hellenistic period as discussed in modern scholarship, the story of John Hyrkanos' withdrawal from the siege because of the Sabbath year cannot hold either.³⁰ Nonetheless, the

fere in a time of an imminent crisis. Susanna does not assume authority but serves as a model of moral superiority.

- 28 Thoma (1994, 131–2) reads the passage as entirely favoring John Hyrkanos. Schwentzel (2011, 233) suggests an unknown pro-Hasmonean source. Tal Ilan believes that Nikolaos of Damaskos was Josephus' source, and perhaps even the inventor of the story, given his preference for dramatic historiography, Ilan 2001, 99–100; cf. also Atkinson 2012, 70. Sievers (1990, 130–1) maintains that Josephus had access to a "romantic but inaccurate 'Story of the Hasmoneans'," that he used especially for his account on Simon and his successors. I agree with Sievers' argument that Nikolaos was most probably not the source for this present story; although he was highly interested in romantic and dramatic historiography, his romances are "of a more 'literary' and traditional sort." Sievers (1990, 131) lists the main differences between Josephus' account in the *Jewish Antiquities* and the report in *1 Maccabees*, including the fact that Josephus' story focuses on its main protagonists, that Ptolemy himself led the attack against Jerusalem, and that Josephus' version does not mention the letter to Antiochos nor Ptolemy's approach of other Hasmonean commanders. In my opinion, these features are more indicative of a popular oral tradition; cf. also Sievers 1988, 133.
- 29 The account in the *Jewish Antiquities* on the rule of Simon significantly deviates from the *Vorlage* of *1 Maccabees*, thereby prompting scholars to discuss whether Josephus had any access to this last part of *1 Maccabees*; cf. Gafni 1989, 117; Dancy 1954, 31. For a summary of the discussion whether *1 Macc* 14–16 was later added to the text see, for instance, Williams 2001, 172–4; Eckhardt 2013, 13–4 with no. 36. The arguments against the unity of the text do not sufficiently explain why Josephus had access to only a supposed early redaction. In this context, however, that Josephus had other sources that he used and trusted is the only important issue.
- 30 A usual assumption is that either 136/5 or 135/4 BC was a sabbatical year, with the next one following in either 129/8 or 128/7 BC. These dates are hardly reconcilable with Simon's death

existence of the story and the fact that it was sufficiently prominent to be reflected by Josephus in both of his historiographical works indicate that the wife of Simon was accorded a certain place in the public memory of the glorious reign of her husband and her son. The story also presupposes that the wife of Simon participated in what is presented as an official tour around Hasmonean Judea.³¹ On this basis, we can conclude that she assumed some public presence. Even though the narrative as such is highly doubtful, it provides evidence that the wife of Simon was perceived and remembered not only as an integral part of the dynasty, but as an outstanding individual who lived up to the reputation of her husband and his brothers.

V. THE FEMALE HASMONEANS DURING THE RULE OF JOHN HYRKANOS

John Hyrkanos, the only surviving son of Simon, was the first of the Hasmoneans to inherit rule from his father. Given that he had not fought in the revolt against the Seleukids, family and descent were of even greater importance for his legitimacy than they had been for his predecessors.³² This importance is evident in one of the pivotal stories in Josephus' account of Hyrkanos' rule, in which the historian again refers to the new ruler's mother, the wife of Simon. According to Josephus, Hyrkanos once hosted a banquet for the religious leaders of the Pharisees whom he held in high esteem. When the ruler and high priest asked his venerable guests whether they had any objections to his actions and policy in general, a certain Eleazar was the only one to speak up. Eleazar claimed that Hyrkanos' mother had been a war captive of the Seleukids during the Maccabean revolt. The purity of Hyrkanos' descent was therefore regarded as questionable,³³ and Eleazar conse-

at the beginning of 134 BC because Josephus states that the following siege of Doq by John Hyrkanos ended owing to the advent of the Sabbath year. For a general discussion of the conflicting dates and possible conclusions, see Bickermann 1937, 157 no. 2; Wacholder 1973, 163–5 (arguing for the historicity of the account); Goldstein 1976, 541–3; Schürer et al. 1973 vol. I, 19, 202–3 with no. 5; Sievers 1990, 136 no. 3. Wacholder argues in favor of the basic chronology provided by Josephus but maintains that Hyrkanos had to withdraw from the siege out of shortage of food supply as a result of the previous Sabbath year. Another feasible interpretation, supported *inter alia* by Goldstein (1976, 541–2) and Atkinson (2012, 73–4), indicates that John Hyrkanos was compelled to devote his forces to defending Judea against the approaching Antiochos VII Sidetes. In this case, the reference to the sabbatical year may have been incorporated into the story to legitimize John Hyrkanos' withdrawal from the siege and to account for Ptolemy's subsequent escape.

- 31 Cf. Sievers 1991, 131; Mendels 2013, 103. A possibility, of course, is that Simon's wife seized the opportunity to visit her daughter and accompanied her husband and their sons only for this purpose. In this case, however, she would have still been part of the official entourage.
- 32 He also was the first of the Hasmoneans to rule for an extended period of time as justifiably emphasized by Eshel (2008, 63), who also points out that Hyrkanos was the one who "consolidated the Hasmonean state".
- 33 Jos. *AJ* 13.291–2. For the biblical regulations regarding the purity of the priesthood, see *Lev* 21.7, 13–5.

quently requested that the Hasmonean forfeit his claim to the high priesthood, and instead be content with political power alone.

Eleazar most likely criticized Hyrkanos not only because of his mother's past, but also out of discontent with the Hasmonean assumption of the high priesthood in general. Although the criticism according to Josephus' account came only from individual ill-will, the harsh reaction of John Hyrkanos – he subsequently cut all ties to the Pharisees and turned favor toward the rival sect of the Sadducees – proves the significance of the insult.³⁴ Hyrkanos' decision therefore reveals another important role of women in the dynasty: they were the protectors and guarantors of priestly purity. Moreover, Eleazar's insults highlight the wife of Simon as the first Hasmonean woman who was given considerable attention by the public. Such attention is evidenced by the fact that even her whereabouts during the war were remembered, details that were not recorded in the accounts of the revolt in *1 Maccabees* or by Flavius Josephus. Soon enough, however, John Hyrkanos' own wife would surpass her mother-in-law in importance for the state and the dynasty as the first Hasmonean woman who can be identified as a political player.

Again, biographical data is lacking: the background, date, and circumstances of her marriage to John Hyrkanos, even her name, are unknown. All we know for the period prior to John Hyrkanos' death is that the couple had five sons; daughters, if they had any, are not mentioned in primary sources.³⁵ Similar to the wife of Simon, her son's consort is mentioned in the historical records only on the occasion of the ruler's death. Flavius Josephus describes how John Hyrkanos' son Aristoboulos ascended to the throne:

“Now of his brothers he [Aristoboulos] loved only Antigonos, who was next in age, and considered him worthy of a position like his own, while he kept his other brothers in chains. He also imprisoned his mother, who had disputed the royal power with him – for Hyrkanos had left her mistress of the realm (τῶν ὅλων κυρία) –, and carried his cruelty so far that he caused her to die of starvation.”³⁶

34 Jos. *AJ* 13.293–6 attributes John Hyrkanos' turn against the Pharisees to the Sadducee John, who compelled John Hyrkanos to favor the Sadducees instead. Cf. Efron 1987, 162–4; Dabrowa 2010, 78–9. Thoma (1994, 134–5) attributes John Hyrkanos' enraged reaction at least partly to the cruel death that his mother had suffered under the hands of Ptolemy (and that he had failed to prevent). The doubts about the legitimacy of his descent were maintained among the opposition, as indicated by his son Alexander Jannaios facing the same allegations, although in the latter's case, they were shouted at him by a crowd in the Temple due to the general discontent with his rule, Jos. *AJ* 13.372. The same tradition seems to lie behind the story in *bQiddushin* 66a on King Yannai. For a comparison of Josephus' version with the Talmudic story, see Neusner 1971, vol. III, 107–9; Efron 1987, 168–9, 176–185; Sievers 1990, 148 with no. 45; Noam 2014.

35 Jos. *AJ* 13.299, *BJ* 1.68.

36 Jos. *AJ* 13.302 (Translation R. Marcus): στέργων δὲ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὸν μετ' αὐτὸν Ἀντίγονον τοῦτον μὲν τῶν ὁμοίων ἡξίου, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους εἶχεν ἐν δεσμοῖς. εἰρξε δὲ καὶ τὴν μητέρα περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ διενεχθεῖσαν, ἐκείνην γὰρ Ὑρκανὸς τῶν ὅλων κυρία καταλείπει, καὶ μέχρι τοσαύτης ὠμότητος προήλθεν, ὥστ' αὐτὴν καὶ λιμῷ διέφθειρεν δεδεμένην. See also Jos. *BJ* 1.70–1.

This is the only occasion on which Josephus refers to John Hyrkanos' surprising decision to appoint his wife as his successor, and he does not provide any details or further explanation. Nevertheless, this short account allows us to draw conclusions regarding her contribution to her husband's rule. Earlier in his account, Josephus reports that Hyrkanos had hated his younger son Alexander Jannaios from an early age and had sent the boy away to be raised in Galilee.³⁷ However, the story does not elucidate why the ruler did not appoint one of his other sons as heir apparent, especially given Josephus' earlier account of Hyrkanos' particular fondness for Aristoboulos and Antigonos, who had already gained some political and military experience.³⁸ The scarcity of sources prevents us from reconstructing when and why Hyrkanos' sons lost his support. Nevertheless, the fact that he favored his soon-to-be widow over one of their children implies much more than a simple quarrel between a father and his sons.

This unprecedented act also indicates that John Hyrkanos deemed his wife capable of ruling. She therefore must have proven herself politically, and as a trustworthy advisor who appeared to her husband as well informed, intelligent, and competent enough to successfully govern Judea.³⁹ Josephus' account further suggests that her designation was more than a mere whim of Hyrkanos alone. After his death, his widow actively claimed the throne for herself,⁴⁰ and the fact that Aristoboulos had her imprisoned proves that he regarded her as a serious rival. She even appears as the principal challenger of Aristoboulos' legitimacy in claiming the throne since she was the only member of his family whom he condemned to death, while mere imprisonment was sufficient for his brothers. Even as Aristoboulos secured victory over his (potential) fraternal competitors for the throne, he regarded the elimination of his mother as necessary. Her cruel death suggests that her late husband was not the only one to support her rule but that she had a following among the people, the administration, and the elite, who must then have previously witnessed her act in some political and/or public capacity. Reconstructing when and how she had gained this experience, reputation, and trust is impossible to accomplish; we can infer, however, that although her esteem was insufficient to enable her to prevail against her power-hungry son, it was strong enough to cause him some measure of concern.⁴¹

The historicity of this account has been questioned in modern scholarship, and the story has been considered a doublet of the accession of Salome Alexandra thirty

37 Jos. *AJ* 13.322. The reconstruction of Atkinson (2012, 91–6) that John Hyrkanos had planned Alexander Jannaios to be his successor as high priest who should then rule together with his mother after the ruler's death and that he did thus send Alexander away for his own safety has no foundation in ancient sources. However, it is worth mentioning that Galilee was conquered only under Aristoboulos in 104 BC.

38 Jos. *AJ* 13.276–83, *BJ* 1.64–5. According to *AJ* 13.282–3, John Hyrkanos heard a voice in the Temple announcing the victory of his sons Aristoboulos and Antigonos against Antiochos IX Kyzikenos in 108/107 BC. Cf. also *tSota* 13.5; *ySota* 9.13; *bSota* 33a, mentioning the city of Antiocheia instead; Sievers 1991, 149.

39 Cf. Ilan 2001, 101.

40 *περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ διενεχθεῖσαν*, *AJ* 13.322.

41 Cf. Ilan 2001, 101; Schwentzel 2011, 233; Atkinson 2012, 90–1.

years later.⁴² But Josephus' account of Aristoboulos' cruel action against his mother suggests that there may be a historical kernel. The appointment of his wife was clearly an emergency solution by John Hyrkanos that was prompted by the growing discontent with – and irreversible mistrust of – his sons. However, the assumption of power by a dynastic woman was now an option in Hasmonean Judea. Both issues – the power assumed by female Hasmoneans especially in times of crisis and the prevalent norms of male rulers – again became evident by the end of Aristoboulos' rule.

VI. SALINA ALEXANDRA, ARISTOBOULOS' *BASILISSA*

The wife of the matricidal Aristoboulos is the first woman of the Hasmonean dynasty whose name is preserved. Josephus refers to her as “his wife Salina, called Alexandra by the Greeks.”⁴³ Nothing of her background is known,⁴⁴ but she was the next female Hasmonean to actively intervene in Judean and dynastic politics.

Flavius Josephus mentions Salina Alexandra for the first time as part of a narrative describing a court intrigue against Antigonos, the younger brother of Aristoboulos. As previously stated, Antigonos was the only brother that the king spared from imprisonment; instead, he served as Aristoboulos' right hand and was afforded an almost equal share in power.⁴⁵ When the king fell seriously ill, Antigonos was considered his most likely successor, especially because the king apparently had no children. Salina Alexandra and other unidentified members of the court wanted to prevent Antigonos from assuming the crown. Through rumor mongering and malicious remarks, they tricked Aristoboulos into believing that his brother wanted to depose him, thereby inducing him to have Antigonos killed.⁴⁶ The story, as recorded by Josephus, is full of ambiguities. He neither gives a specific reason for the faction's dislike of Antigonos nor does he further explain the actual role that

42 See, for instance, Marcus 1966, comm. ad *AJ* 13.301. Geiger (2002, 2–3) justifiably points to the major impact that the accession of a woman to a position so closely tied to the high priesthood would have had for the Hasmonean state in general and therefore concludes that this only became an option after the adoption of kingship. If we accept this reconstruction, however, accounting for the cruel death of Aristoboulos' mother would be difficult. Given that no details are known about the background or any specific instructions that John Hyrkanos left for his wife and successor, any interpretations of the planned relation between ruler and religious authority remain speculative. Geiger also considers that John Hyrkanos may have been married twice and that the succeeding rift between Aristoboulos and Antigonos on the one hand and Alexander Jannaios and his two brothers (as well as their mother) on the other was an amphimetric conflict, similar to many inner-dynastic strife in other dynasties, cf. Ogden 1999.

43 *AJ* 13.320: Σαλίνα ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ, λεγομένη δὲ ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων Ἀλεξάνδρα.

44 Salina is either an erroneous rendition of Salome or an independent Semitic name, Ilan 1993, 185; Ilan 2006, 55–6 argues more fervently for interpreting Salina and Salome as two different names. Alexandra is a common female name in the Hasmonean dynasty, cf. Ilan 1989, 193; Ilan 1993, 184–5.

45 Jos. *AJ* 13.303–4, *BJ* 1.71–2.

46 Jos. *AJ* 13.303–9, the explicit reference to the queen is in 308; *BJ* 1.72–7, mentioning the queen in 77.

the queen (called *basilissa* here for the first time) played in the scheme.⁴⁷ The narrative nonetheless clearly presents her as a person who was trusted by both brothers, who actively intervened in political affairs when she felt the need to do so, and who was adequately well connected at the court to engender rumor.⁴⁸

The story, as presented by Josephus, must originate from a rumour because it would be difficult to believe that the conspirators publicized their insights and their own involvement in the plot after the deed.⁴⁹ However, Salina Alexandra's plans were clearly driven by a more elaborate motivation than merely the desire to eliminate a disliked brother-in-law. Josephus thus recounts:

On the death of Aristoboulos, his wife Salina, by the Greeks called Alexandra, released his brothers – for Aristoboulos had imprisoned them, as we have said before –, and appointed as king Jannaïos, also known as Alexander, who was best fitted for this office by reason of his age and his evenness of temper.⁵⁰

Despite its laconic character, the passage describes a severe political crisis. With the death of Aristoboulos, no son for an heir, and his brothers either dead or imprisoned, succession to the throne was again unstable. In this situation, it was the queen who immediately took the initiative by releasing his brothers from prison and establishing Alexander Jannaïos as successor to the throne. The verb used by Josephus in this context is *καθίστημι*, which indicates that it was indeed Salina Alexandra who transferred the power to the new king and high priest.⁵¹ In this interim moment, she was the only free and capable member of the dynasty and in this capacity, she assumed control over political affairs.

The leading role that Salina had played in the plot against Antigonos proves that she was sufficiently well connected and influential at the court to take on such responsibilities. Instead of claiming rule for herself, however, she freed the imprisoned brothers and appointed Alexander Jannaïos, whom she deemed not only legitimate because of his age, but also because she considered him the best suited for the task. That Salina Alexandra was able to accomplish this indicates the authority that she wielded at the court. That she immediately passed power over to her brother-in-law, however, confirms what appears to be the general model of Hasmonean succession, i. e., that the eldest son or brother inherits power from a deceased ruler.⁵² The temporary assumption of power by a woman was therefore exceptional and, as in the case of the wife of John Hyrkanos, only meant to prevent a severe crisis. After

47 The story, as told by Josephus, also invites speculation on whether Antigonos actually planned a putsch against his brother, who was weakened by illness; at least his public appearance in the Temple in full armor and participation in the sacrifice would allow for such an interpretation, cf. *AJ* 13.303–9, *BJ* 1.73–4.

48 Dabrowa (2010, 85) assumes that she was also behind Aristoboulos' assumption of power a year earlier and the putsch against his mother because of the otherwise rather favorable depiction of Aristoboulos in Josephus (or, rather, in Josephus' source). This assumption is, however, unsupported by primary evidence.

49 Ilan 2001, 101.

50 *Jos. AJ* 13.320. In the parallel account in *BJ* 1.85, the wife of Aristoboulos remains anonymous. Cf. Geiger 2002, 4.

51 *Jos. AJ* 13.320. *BJ* 1.85.

52 Cf. Atkinson 2012, 96–7.

having securely established Alexander Jannaios' position as ruler, Salina Alexandra vanished from historical records.

VII. ALEXANDER JANNAIOS AND SALOME ALEXANDRA

With Alexander Jannaios as king and high priest of Judea, we have reached the period of Salome Alexandra, his wife, who would soon become the first and only Hasmonean queen to rule. Despite her principal role, no information about her background or life prior to her marriage to Alexander Jannaios is provided.⁵³ It has been assumed in modern scholarship that Salome Alexandra and Salina Alexandra, the wife of Aristoboulos, are identical and that Alexander had married his brother's widow following the commandment of levirate marriage in *Deut* 25.5–10.⁵⁴ However, Tal Ilan and other scholars have convincingly argued that no evidence exists regarding the identity of Salina Alexandra and Salome Alexandra.⁵⁵ Salome (if Salina is an actual derivation of this name) and Alexandra were common personal names, especially in the Hasmonean dynasty.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Josephus never indicates that Alexander Jannaios and Alexandra Salome entered a levirate marriage, and he does not hint or even speculate over Aristoboulos and Alexander Jannaios being married to the same woman. Josephus' account of the court intrigue leading to the death of Antigonos, the subsequent death of Aristoboulos, and the accession of Alexander, with all its dramatic and emotional yet moralizing elements, most probably depends on Nikolaos of Damaskos.⁵⁷ A marriage between the widow of the recently deceased ruler and the new king would have perfectly fit this story; presuming that Nikolaos (or Josephus) would have missed this aspect is hard to believe.⁵⁸ As high priest, Jannaios was also prohibited from entering into a levirate marriage, and that the newly established ruler would have committed such a major transgression of the law immediately after his appointment is highly implausible.⁵⁹ In addition, given that Hyrkanos II, the eldest son of Salome Alexandra and

53 Dabrowa 2010, 123.

54 Cf., *inter alia*, Zeitlin 1960, 3–8; Sievers 1988, 135–6 (with some doubts whether this was, in fact, a levirate marriage); Dabrowa 2010, 85–6; Schwentzel 2011, 233–4. This interpretation has also given rise to the widespread conclusion that Aristoboulos' widow / Salome Alexandra chose Alexander Jannaios because she perceived him as weak and thus hoped that she could rule through him; cf., for instance, Zeitlin 1960, 23–4; Marcus 1964, comm. ad *AJ* 13.320; Geiger 2002, 4–5. For an overview of previous scholarship see Ilan 1993, 181 no. 1; Lambers-Petry 2003, 68. For levirate marriage and its practice in the Second Temple period in general, see Ilan 1995, 152–7.

55 Ilan 1993; Ilan 1995, 155–7; Ilan 2006, 50–8. See also Atkinson 2012, 63.

56 For the frequency of the names, see Ilan 1989, 191–2 and 198–9 (for Salome), 193 (for Alexandra); Ilan 1993, 186; Ilan 2002, 249–53 (for Salome), 313–4 (for Alexandra), 344 (for Salina), 426–9 (for Shelamzion). For the discussion whether Salina should be interpreted as a deviated form of Salome, see above no. 45. See also Lambers-Petry 2003, 68–9.

57 Cf. Ilan 2001, 101.

58 For Nikolaos' interest in royal women in general, as it becomes evident in Josephus' account of the court of Herod, see Ilan 2001, 100–1.

59 High priests are exempted from the duty to conduct a levirate marriage, *mYebamot* 6.4; *mSan-*

Alexander Jannaios, was already in his eighties when he was executed by Herod the Great in 30 BC, he must have been born before 104 BC.⁶⁰ Salome Alexandra thus had at least one son when Alexander Jannaios assumed kingship. A levirate marriage, which is required for a childless widow, is therefore impossible,⁶¹ at least if we trust Josephus' chronology.⁶²

There must have been a different reason for the marriage between Alexander Jannaios and Salome Alexandra. According to Josephus, Salome Alexandra was 73 years old when she died in 67 BC,⁶³ and she was 37 when Jannaios assumed power. Since Jannaios was only 22/24 at that point, she was 13/15 years his senior.⁶⁴ If we accept Josephus' basic chronology, two interpretations seem feasible: either Salome Alexandra was a member of the Hasmonean dynasty by birth, and this marriage arrangement was meant to secure the family ranks, as it was the case in the succeeding generations,⁶⁵ or her family background was so venerable and important that the marriage was regarded as an opportunity too important to be ignored. The information available, however, is too ambiguous to allow any further conclusion.

In his account of Alexander's rule, Flavius Josephus emphasizes the growing alienation that the people felt towards their king, and when the Pharisees drew increasing support as the largest oppositional group, Alexander Jannaios responded

hedrin 2.1–2, see Ilan 1993, 182 with previous scholarship. Geiger (2002, 5–6) argues that Alexander Jannaios married the widow of Aristoboulos after his release from prison but before he assumed the high priesthood. Although this seems to be in line with the traditional regulations, it is difficult to believe that the new king would have taken such a disreputable step that could have jeopardized his high priesthood and legitimacy to rule. Lambers-Petry (2003, 69) maintains that Alexander Jannaios did not care about these regulations, a contentious argument given Alexander Jannaios' need to build legitimacy.

60 Jos. *AJ* 15.178. Cf. Ilan 1993, 187. Lambers-Petry 2003, 69.

61 Geiger (2002, 8–16) has a good point in arguing that marrying the widow of the recently deceased ruler was a common practice in many Hellenistic dynasties to establish and strengthen the legitimacy of the successor. This argument, however, insufficiently supports the confusion over Salina Alexandra and Salome Alexandra. Another speculative argument is Geiger's further reconstruction that Aristoboulos I was married twice, with Hyrkanos II being the offspring of one of his wives, while his childless widow later married Alexander Jannaios and gave birth to Aristoboulos II. Hyrkanos II and his brother Aristoboulos II are also explicitly called sons of Salome Alexandra and Alexander Jannaios in Jos. *BJ* 1.109; *AJ* 13.399, 407 with 411.

62 Lambers-Petry (2003, 69) rightly emphasizes the dubiousness of many of Josephus' chronological details.

63 Jos. *AJ* 13.430, *BJ* 1.119.

64 Alexander Jannaios was 51 or 49 years old when he died in 76 BC, *AJ* 13.404. For manuscript variants, see Niese 1892. Cf. Ilan 1993, 187–8.

65 Aristoboulos II married a daughter of his uncle Absalom; Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrkanos II, was married to her cousin Alexander, the son of Aristoboulos. However, there are no indications that Salome Alexandra did, in fact, belong to the dynasty by birth. Tal Ilan maintains that Salome may have received the name Alexandra through her marriage with Alexander Jannaios (Ilan 1987, 3, Ilan 1993, 185). In her seminal article on the potential levirate marriage between Alexander Jannaios and Salome Alexandra, Ilan ponders the possibility that both Salina Alexandra and Salome Alexandra were cousins of their respective Hasmonean husbands, Ilan 1993, 184–5; Ilan 1995, 156. Atkinson (2012, 61) thinks that because of the later examples of endogamic marriages within the Hasmonean family, Salome Alexandra must have been a member of the family as well.

with rigorous persecution and suppression.⁶⁶ Similar to all the Hasmonean women before her, Salome Alexandra enters Josephus' narrative only during Alexander's final days.⁶⁷ The account in the *Jewish Antiquities* states that the king fell ill while on a military campaign in the North, during the siege of the fortress of Ragaba. In his dramatic recounting of the scene, Josephus reports how Alexander Jannaios appointed Salome Alexandra as his successor on his deathbed.⁶⁸ According to the *Jewish Antiquities*, the advice that the dying king gave his wife was twofold: first, to conceal his death from the people and soldiers until the fall and conquest of Ragaba so that she could earn their acceptance through a military victory, and second to make peace with the Pharisees in order to gain the favor of the people. This is not the place to discuss Salome Alexandra's accession to power in greater detail, and the story told by Josephus bears many legendary, exaggerated elements. However, the logic of the narrative is based on the assumption that Salome Alexandra rose to power during the siege of Ragaba, implying that the queen was present during the campaign. This appears exceptional, but as seen above, at least Josephus' version of the death of Simon also suggests that his wife accompanied him on his tour around the nation, although in supposedly more peaceful times. More important, though, is Josephus' notion that Salome Alexandra was the only one who realized that Alexander was about to die. The king's advice to conceal his death implies that neither his generals nor his soldiers were deeply disturbed by receiving their orders from the queen rather than the king.

Josephus' account of Salome Alexandra's appointment by her dying husband thus confirms the general patterns we have already observed. First, the role of the woman is undermined in the narrative. In Josephus' report of Alexander Jannaios' death, the future queen remains almost passive, and the major characteristics of her future policy as ruler of Judea, especially her support of the Pharisees, are credited to her husband and not to her. No further explanation is given for why Jannaios trusted his wife more than he did one of his sons with the difficult task of stabilizing the precarious Hasmonean rule in Judea. Nevertheless, the setting of the scene and the dramatic account ascribe a position to Salome Alexandra that is far more powerful and influential than that admitted by Josephus and (we can assume) his sources.

66 Jos. *AJ* 13.372–3, 376, 379–83. For the beginning of the alienation between the Pharisees and the house of the Hasmoneans under John Hyrkanos, see above.

67 In *AJ* 14.10, Josephus states that Antipas, the grandfather of Herod the Great, was appointed as *strategos* of Idumaea by king Alexander [Jannaios] and his wife (Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς γυναίκας αὐτοῦ). This may be a reference to Salome Alexandra's (official) involvement in the administration during her husband's rule but was probably meant to indicate that Antipas was confirmed in office by Salome Alexandra after her accession to the throne.

68 Jos. *AJ* 18.399–401. In *BJ* 1.107–8, Alexander Jannaios appoints Salome Alexandra as his successor because of her piety and popularity among the people.

VIII. HASMONEAN WOMEN AND THEIR HELLENISTIC COUNTERPARTS: CONCLUSIONS

Information about the female members of the Hasmonean family prior to the accession of Salome Alexandra is scarce, and it is tempting to conclude that women played only a minor (if any) role in the power structure of the early Hasmonean state. As in most systems of hereditary rule, the women of the dynasty derived their importance from their role in guaranteeing the continuity, as well as the purity, of the family lineage. But a closer analysis of the existing evidence has shown that dynastic reproduction was not the only domain of the female Hasmoneans. Unfortunately, the scarcity of sources does not allow us to reconstruct the roles that they assumed in the dynasty's public representation and propaganda. The monument erected by Simon above the Maccabean graves in Modein honored his mother in the same way as his father and his brothers, but this is the only example known to us. Yet the wife of Simon was widely known to the public, and stories about her life and death still circulated for more than two centuries after her death.

The wives of the Hasmonean rulers after Simon began to play an even more important role in the politics of their time. Both John Hyrkanos and Alexander Jannaios had enough trust in their wives' political capabilities that they designated them as successors. We have to conclude that the two women served their husbands at least as political advisors on a fairly regular basis. Moreover, the two rulers were not the only ones who trusted, respected, and supported these women in their political ambitions. The wife of John Hyrkanos was perceived by her son, Aristoboulos, as the most dangerous threat to his rule and was the only family member whom he put to death. Salina Alexandra did not encounter any significant resistance when she assumed power after her husband's death, set her imprisoned brothers-in-law free, and facilitated Alexander Jannaios' accession to the throne. Salome Alexandra was challenged by members of the elite during her rule because of the favor that she showed the Pharisees,⁶⁹ but her accession to the throne was apparently smooth. The wives and widows of the Hasmonean rulers were regarded as legitimate representatives of the dynasty, not only by their husbands and next of kin, but also by the public and the influential members of the court and administration.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, female rule was neither the norm in Hasmonean Judea nor was it regarded as desirable. The primary sources do not reveal what prompted John Hyrkanos and Alexander Jannaios to choose their wives over their sons as successors, yet in each case we may suppose that there was strife within the dynasty. After the death of Aristoboulos, Salina Alexandra took over because she was the only member of the family left who had avoided imprisonment, and she ceded power after she had freed and appointed her brother-in-law, Alexander Jannaios.⁷¹ While

69 Jos. *AJ* 13.411–7, 422–9.

70 It deserves emphasis that political influence can only be reconstructed for the wives/widows of recent Hasmonean rulers; no other female member of the family is ever mentioned in any relevant political capacity. The daughters and sisters of the Hasmonean family prior to the time of Salome Alexandra are almost completely ignored by all primary sources.

71 At least according to our sources Salina Alexandra ceded power voluntarily.

the assumption of power by a female member of the dynasty was considered an option in times of crisis, the Hasmonean ideal that power should be transferred from father to son was maintained⁷².

A close analysis of the extant primary sources has led to a conclusion that differs significantly from the image that the ancient narratives attempt to evoke. However, this reconstruction appears less surprising if we analyze the Hasmonean dynasty and its rule against the broader Hellenistic background. Like their Ptolemaic and Seleukid peers, Hasmonean women guaranteed the continuity and legitimacy of the dynasty, they were presented and perceived as important members of the ruling family, they served as advisors to their husbands, and gained political influence at the court. The assumption of power by wives, widows, and mothers in times of political crisis was an equally common feature in the Hellenistic world.⁷³ The important role assumed by at least some Hasmonean women is neither surprising nor accidental, but fits the precedent set by the Hellenistic dynasties around Judaea. The Hasmoneans faced the challenge of establishing the first Jewish dynastic rule in Judea since the neo-Babylonian conquest in 586 BC.⁷⁴ The Seleukid system, including the prominence assumed by its female members, was well known in Judea, and it was the only model that the Hasmoneans and their compatriots had ever experienced. The administration of the new Judean state emulated its Seleukid predecessor, and Hasmonean rulers adopted common Hellenistic features in their representation and propaganda.⁷⁵ Similarities in the role of dynastic women are thus not an exception but rather fit the general picture.

In many other aspects, however, the role of Hasmonean women differed significantly from that of royal women in the Seleukid and other Hellenistic empires. For

72 Cf. Sievers 1988, 145. Ilan (1993, 190) instead maintains that the assumption of power by the widows of recently deceased husbands was “common practice” in Hasmonean Judea and followed Hellenistic models. Cf. *IMacc* 14.25, 49 (Simon and his sons), *Jos. AJ* 13.301 (John Hyrkanos and his two elder sons), 13.407, 417 (Salome Alexandra and her two sons). In addition, the high priesthood as one, if not the most important office for Hasmonean rulers was, of course, available only for the males of the family.

73 Cf., for instance, Kleopatra Syra as regent for Ptolemy VI after the death of Ptolemy V in 180 BC, Kleopatra II, albeit only shortly, after the death of Ptolemy VI in 145 BC, Kleopatra III with Ptolemy IX and Ptolemy X, respectively, after the death of Ptolemy 116 BC; cf. Whitehorne 1994, 86–7, 106, 132–148. For examples among the Argead dynasty, including Thessalonike, who ruled as guardian for her sons after the death of Kassander in BC, see Carney 1995, 382; Carney 2000, 114–52, 155–64.

74 In addition, the Hasmonean system did not emulate the Davidic or any other traditional model. Its combination of religious authority, military command, and political power was a novelty in Judean history.

75 For the Hasmonean administration modeled after its Seleukid predecessor see Dabrowa 2010, esp. 147–8; for Hellenistic models for the Bronze Tablet honoring Simon, quoted in *IMacc* 14.27–45, see van Henten 2001 (with special emphasis on Ptolemaic parallels). Noteworthy in this context is especially the right granted to Simon to wear a purple robe and a gold brooch (*IMacc* 14.44). Aristoboulos was the first of the Hasmonean rulers who adopted the title *basilus* in addition to being Jewish high priest. For Hasmonean coins and Hellenistic, and, in particular, Seleukid symbols, such as the inverted anchor and the cornucopia, cf., *inter alia*, Hoover 1994, Meshorer 2001, esp. 33–49, Hoover 2003.

instance, marital alliances with other dynasties, one of the most prevalent instruments of Hellenistic diplomacy, were impossible for the Hasmoneans because all marriage partners had to be Jewish.⁷⁶ Pictorial representations, let alone the establishment of a cult for the ruler and/or the dynasty were never an option, and the female Hasmoneans could not assume priestly (or any other religious) office. Finally, since the Hasmonean system was based on the combination of high priesthood and political power, rule by a female member of the dynasty was *by definition* considered an exception. Salome Alexandra solved this conundrum by appointing her son, Hyrkanos II, as high priest. Since he was also her designated successor, the division of religious authority and political rule was only meant to be temporary. Sole rule by a woman was equally rare in the rest of the Hellenistic world, yet the ideological framework in Judea was notably different because of the Hasmoneans' Jewish and priestly identities.

In their public presentation, their role in dynastic propaganda, and their political influence and power, Hasmonean women combined features that were common among Hellenistic royalty with elements that were meant and understood as distinctively Jewish; a trend towards fusion that is characteristic of the Hasmonean dynasty and its rule in general.⁷⁷ Yet one of the main differences between the dynastic propaganda of the Seleukids (as well as, for this matter, the Ptolemies) and the Hasmoneans must still be addressed. The discussion above has shown that the women of the Hasmonean dynasty prior to Salome Alexandra bore far more importance than has been usually assumed. However, this conclusion was only reached through a very close reading of the few passages that refer to Hasmonean women; for many of them, we lack any evidence at all. We might consider this scarcity of evidence as a byproduct of the particular situation in Judaea, where the epigraphic habit so common in other ancient societies never firmly took root and other features of Hellenistic representation such as public honors were equally uncommon.⁷⁸ Yet the women of the family were also omitted almost completely in the most important work of pro-Hasmonean propaganda that has come down to us, the *First Book of Maccabees*. At first glance, the absence of female Hasmoneans from a treatise focusing on a military struggle for survival and independence does not seem surprising. However, for a work primarily written to praise and legitimize the Hasmonean dynasty and its rule,⁷⁹ such disregard of female family members is unusual, if not counterproductive.

76 Endogamic marriages were a common feature among later generations, but this should not be projected back to the period prior to Salome Alexandra, see above no. 65.

77 See, for instance, Rajak 1990; Rappaport 1992; Rajak 1996; Gruen 1998, esp. ch. 1; McGing 2003; Regev 2011 et al. Cf. Gruen 1998, 293: The Hasmoneans "redefined themselves in the terms of a culture that they had now made their own but left intact the core of their ancestral legacy. They displayed a talent not so much for adaptation as for expropriation."

78 For Hellenistic comparisons see, for instance, Savalli-Lestrade 1994; Savalli-Lestrade 2003b, 67–72; Carney 2011, 197–8.

79 The pro-Hasmonean, dynastic character of *I Maccabees* becomes apparent especially in *IMacc* 5.62 where the defeat of the rebel forces under the command of Joseph, son of Zacharias, and Azarias is explained by the fact that these two "were not of the seed of those men to whom was given salvation to Israel by their hand" (αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἦσαν ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν ἀνδρῶν

Instead of dwelling on the women of the Maccabees, the text refers to another Hellenistic queen: Kleopatra Thea, the daughter of Ptolemy VI Philometor. She is first mentioned in the context of Ptolemy's alliance with Alexander Balas, and the text proudly reports that Jonathan was invited to the wedding between Kleopatra and the Seleukid king in Ptolemais⁸⁰ and especially honored by both kings:

And Ptolemy came out of Egypt, he and his daughter, and came to Ptolemais in the year 162. And Alexander the king met him, and he [Ptolemy] gave him his daughter and held her wedding in Ptolemais as kings with great pomp. And Alexander the king wrote to Jonathan to come to a meeting with him, and he came with pomp to Ptolemais and met with the two kings, and he gave silver and gold to them and to their friends and many gifts and he found favor among them.⁸¹

Shortly afterwards, however, the tone changes as Ptolemy began to support Alexander's rival, Demetrios II. *I Maccabees* recounts this shift in alliance as follows:

But King Ptolemy took control of the cities on the coast as far as Seleukeia by the sea. And he was contemplating evil thoughts about Alexander. And he sent ambassadors to Demetrios the king saying: 'Come, let us conclude an agreement between ourselves, and I will give you my daughter, whom Alexander has, and you will rule over the kingdom of your father. For I have changed my mind about giving my daughter to him, because he sought to kill me.' And he blamed him because he desired his kingdom. And he took his daughter away and gave her to Demetrios, and he became alienated from Alexander and their hostility became apparent.⁸²

The passage presents Ptolemy's disloyalty and his scheming plans with clear contempt. Since the Hasmoneans did not participate in the networks of inter-dynastic marriages across the Hellenistic world, Ptolemy's (ab)use of his daughter in the service of his political interests provided a fitting illustration of all the negative

ἐκείνων, οἷς ἐδόθη σωτηρία Ἰσραὴλ διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν). For the dynastic character of *I Maccabees* see, for instance, Bickermann 1937, 29, 31–2, 145–6; Momigliano 1968, 120; Goldstein 1976, esp. 63–4, 77–8; Schunck 1980, 292; Nickelsburg 1981, 116–7; Tcherikover 2004, 190; Regev 2013, 25–6.

80 *IMacc* 10.51–66.

81 *IMacc* 10.57–60 (Translation G.T. Zervos): Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν Πτολεμαῖος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, αὐτὸς καὶ Κλεοπάτρα ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Πτολεμαίδα ἔτους δευτέρου καὶ ἐξηκοστοῦ καὶ ἑκατοστοῦ. καὶ ἀπήντησεν αὐτῷ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ βασιλεὺς, καὶ ἐξέδετο αὐτῷ Κλεοπάτραν τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐποίησεν τὸν γάμον αὐτῆς ἐν Πτολεμαίδι καθὼς οἱ βασιλεῖς ἐν δόξῃ μεγάλῃ. καὶ ἔγραψεν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰωναθῇ ἐλθεῖν εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ. καὶ ἐπορεύθη μετὰ δόξης εἰς Πτολεμαίδα καὶ ἀπήντησεν τοῖς δυοῖν βασιλεῦσι· καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον καὶ τοῖς φίλοις αὐτῶν καὶ δόματα πολλὰ καὶ εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν.

82 *IMacc* 11.8–12 (Translation G.T. Zervos): ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος ἐκυρίευσεν τῶν πόλεων τῆς παραλίας ἕως Σελευκείας τῆς παραθαλασσίας καὶ διελογίζετο περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου λογιμοὺς πονηροὺς. καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρέσβεις πρὸς Δημήτριον τὸν βασιλέα λέγων Δεῦρο συνθώμεθα πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διαθήκην, καὶ δώσω σοι τὴν θυγατέρα μου, ἣν εἶχεν Ἀλέξανδρος, καὶ βασιλεύσεις τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ πατρὸς σου· μεταμεμνημαὶ γὰρ δούς αὐτῷ τὴν θυγατέρα μου, ἐζήτησεν γὰρ ἀποκτεῖναι με. καὶ ἐψόγισεν αὐτὸν χάριν τοῦ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτὸν τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἀφελόμενος αὐτοῦ τὴν θυγατέρα ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν τῷ Δημητρίῳ καὶ ἡλλοιώθη τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, καὶ ἐφάνη ἡ ἔχθρα αὐτῶν.

features associated with Hellenistic monarchy writ large.⁸³ There might, however, be even more to this. *1 Maccabees* was most probably composed in the last third of the second century BC, and the author and his contemporaries were familiar with the exceptionally influential role assumed by Hellenistic queens such as Kleopatra Thea among the Seleukids, as well as Kleopatra II and her daughter Kleopatra III in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸⁴ Although *1 Maccabees* never mentions Kleopatra Thea by name, a contemporary audience surely identified her not only as a pawn in her father's political games, but also as the powerful *basilissa* she would become, the wife of three Seleukid kings and the only queen that ever ruled over the empire in her own right.⁸⁵ Against this background, the almost complete absence of female Hasmoneans from a text such as *1 Maccabees*, which was first written in Hebrew and frequently uses biblical language and parallels to underline the legitimacy of the new Judean dynasty,⁸⁶ appears not as accidental, but rather as intentional. In reality, however, Hasmonean women could gain prominence, popularity, and influence. In this strand of pro-Hasmonean propaganda, written with a particular audience in mind, they were left out, and this silence regarding the women of the family served as an additional marker of distinction that set the Hasmoneans apart from their despised Hellenistic contemporaries.⁸⁷

Whether texts containing more information on the female Hasmoneans ever existed is unknown, but the tradition of the heroic death of Simon's wife, as preserved by Josephus, proves that sources such as *1 Maccabees* were never intended to tell the entire story. However, the Seleukids, along with other Hellenistic dynasties, provided the Hasmoneans with a model flexible enough to be partly adopted and partly rejected.⁸⁸ Both aspects, adoption and rejection, reflect the significance that royal women assumed in the Hellenistic empires, and it is against this background, that the role of women in the Hasmonean dynasty has to be understood and explained.

83 Cf. also the prominence given to the marriages of Antiochos II and Berenike I and Ptolemy V and Kleopatra Syra, respectively, in *Dan* 11.6 and *Dan* 11.17.

84 If we accept a later date for the composition of *1 Maccabees*, this applies also to the women of the following generation, with Kleopatra IV, Kleopatra Selene, and Kleopatra Tryphaena and their decisive role in the inner-Seleukid power struggles. That notably Kleopatra II and III were known for their good relations to the Jewish community in Egypt and the latter became an ally of Alexander Jannaios does not affect the argument presented here. For modern scholarship on the dating of *1 Maccabees* cf. no. 4 above.

85 Cf. Whitehorn 1994, 149–163.

86 See above no. 79.

87 For the phenomenon of "silencing" exceptional women in later traditions, see Ilan 2006, 19–39 and esp. pp. 39–42 (on Salome Alexandra in Rabbinic sources). Ilan provides a convincing framework for the analysis of later sources and traditions. The interpretation suggested here therefore expands this concept.

88 For the flexibility of the roles assigned to and assumed by royal/dynastic women in the Hellenistic period see Carney 2011, 195–6, 208.

KLEOPATRA SELENE – A LOOK AT THE MOON AND HER BRIGHT SIDE

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ABSTRACT

Little is known about the last Seleukid queen, Kleopatra Selene: three bronze denominations (perhaps struck at Damascus, perhaps at Ptolemais) and some literary fragments scattered throughout the works of Cicero, Strabo, Josephus, Appian and Justin. Yet this sparse evidence has enabled modern authors to reconstruct an extraordinary biography of a woman that was involved in six decades of Ptolemaic and Seleukid history, a time of turmoil and internecine wars. She was the daughter of one Ptolemaic king (Ptolemy VIII), the wife of (maybe) two Ptolemies (Ptolemy IX and X) and of another three Seleukids (Antiochos VIII, IX, X), besides being the mother of the last generally-acknowledged Seleukid king, Antiochos XIII. This paper examines the literary and numismatic appearances of Selene until the death of her husband, since most coincide with key moments in the history of the Seleukid dynasty. The hypothesis that she might have had another son called Antiochos (Philometor) will be investigated (and questioned), and it will further be argued that she possibly had several other children besides the Antiochos mentioned by Cicero, as well as an anonymous brother.

I. INTRODUCTION

When examining the complex history of the last decades of the Seleukid dynasty, there is one character who vanishes and resurfaces throughout forty years of internecine wars, yet remains in the background as a spectral presence: the queen called both Kleopatra and ‘Selene’ – the moon.¹

While she may not have been the *éminence grise* of the time (our sources do not allow for such a view), she was nevertheless present when some important decisions were made – most of which concerned her. Her story is intimately connected to the story of the Seleukid dynasty, as she was a queen and wife of three Seleukid kings in addition to her – perhaps – two Ptolemaic husbands, as well as mother to, and occasionally acting queen for, at least one of her sons. In this paper, I shall

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1 Grainger 1997, 45; Hölbl 2000, 206, 222, 238; Ehling 2007, 23–24, 88–89, 234, 237, 242–243, 253, 255; Lightman 2008, 80–81 (s. v.). Macurdy 1932, 170 counts her as Kleopatra “V” in the Ptolemaic lineage, a convention followed by most of the recent authors.

concentrate on the ‘bright side’ of this Moon, as it were, by considering those watershed moments of her life that are sufficiently well attested: her marriages, which I try to date and contextualize, and, to a lesser extent, her offspring, which I try to identify. The sources for exploring the latter are intrinsically connected to her death at the behest of King Tigranes of Armenia, which thus presents us with a suitable end point for this study.

For the most part, I have refrained from discussing Selene’s ‘dark side’, the unknown, impenetrable details of her life and career. Among them are not only the mysterious period between her last marriage in 94 BC with Antiochos X Epiphanes and her capture by Tigranes probably in the later 70s, but also her personality, and her agency as queen through either marriage or regency. Any exploration of these subjects would tread on uncertain ground and allow only some speculation, but such an irresolvable enquiry lies more in the realm of fantasy than history. It thus seems prudent to separate the account on this ‘dark’ side of the Moon from ‘brighter’ historical analysis, even if this comes at the cost of presenting Selene almost exclusively as a passive pawn in late-Hellenistic power games. While indeed this seems to have been her role throughout her first three marriages, I shall mention some circumstances which may reveal more active agency on her part when it came to choosing her last two husbands. Such initiative would have made her a vibrant and indeed powerful player in the complex game of dynastic power.

II. SETTING THE SCENE: KLEOPATRA SELENE AND TWO TROUBLED FAMILIES

According to most modern scholars, the story of the gradual fall of the Seleukid kingdom begins in 129 BC with the failure of the last great expedition in the East,² undertaken by Antiochos VII for the recovery of Mesopotamia and the Upper Satrapies.³ It was then that the “kings of Asia” were reduced to being the “kings of Syria”;⁴ they were henceforth possessors of regional power, which would soon diminish further into merely local power. Nothing of what happened after 129 was new to the Empire as the trends and motifs had all happened before: usurpations by members of the royal house or the appearance of pretenders to the throne; rebellions of ambitious generals; foreign invasions; cities welcoming foreign kings within their walls; major (or even minor) cities which were granted autonomy and came to ignore the authority of the king whenever possible. But after 129 all these phenomena were occurring at a much faster pace, so that the Seleukid kingdom had fewer and fewer resources on which to draw.

2 Almost all the scholars who dedicated specialized studies to this issue (Kuhn, Bellinger etc) prefer to begin their narrative and analysis in 129. All but Ehling, who chose an approach *d’une plus longue durée*, placing the beginnings of the end of the dynasty at the death of Antiochos IV (in 164 BC). He is probably right in doing so, but it is neither the place nor the time to discuss this issue here.

3 For this important episode, see Fischer 1970 and Ehling 2008, 200–208.

4 In fact, it was a sort of a ‘Greater Syria’, comprising Syria, Cilicia, Phoenicia and Palestine.

The situation continued to deteriorate with the return of Demetrios II. He was estranged from his wife Kleopatra Thea,⁵ who had become the wife of his brother Antiochos VII and had children from both brothers. Thus the two branches of the dynasty that would vie with each other over the next six decades were created. Demetrios II tried to invade Egypt,⁶ which was the cause of his ultimate downfall. Ptolemy VIII, the so-called *Kakergetes*, was not the kind of king to wait idly and see what would happen. He acted quickly, by finding a ‘son’ of Alexander I Balas, Alexander II Zabinas, and provided him with all that was necessary to usurp Demetrios. Interestingly, Ptolemy VIII did not – or could not – arrange a marriage between Zabinas and his own niece Kleopatra Thea, who was probably more concerned with the future of her sons by Demetrios II (Antiochos VIII Grypos)⁷ and Antiochos VII (Antiochos IX Kyzikenos)⁸. Demetrios II, having to fight a hopeless internal war, eventually met a tragic fate at Tyre. Between 125–121, Ptolemy VIII decided to support a new candidate, this time a legitimate claimant. He did so for a variety of potential reasons: maybe he had grown tired of Alexander Zabinas, or he wanted to forge a new alliance with his niece Kleopatra Thea, or perhaps he was more interested in supporting a new, younger, and thus more malleable king. For this, he chose his sister’s young protégé Antiochos VIII Grypos, to whom he married his daughter, Kleopatra Tryphaina.⁹

In 116, at the death of Ptolemy VIII Physkon, his sister and wife Kleopatra III became the sole ruler of Egypt, provided she chose one son to rule with her on the throne. Although she would have preferred her cadet Ptolemy X Alexander, she was forced by her mother Kleopatra II to opt for the elder son Ptolemy IX Soter II, also known as Lathyros, on the condition that he would replace his current wife with another. After divorcing Kleopatra IV, Ptolemy IX Lathyros married Kleopatra Selene, following her mother’s command.¹⁰

Left on her own, Kleopatra IV went to Cyprus, raised an army and took this with her when marrying¹¹ a candidate for the Seleukid throne, Antiochos IX Kyzikenos. With the resources she had provided, her husband managed to momentarily dislodge his rival Antiochos Grypos from Antioch. In 112/111, Grypos retook Antioch and, in the process seized Kleopatra IV as well, who had been left behind by her husband to defend the city. At the behest of the king’s wife Kleopatra

5 For a recent view on Kleopatra Thea, see Ager ca. 2016a; Ager & Hardiman, in this volume.

6 For this eighth Syrian War, see Grainger 2010, 368–385, who speaks of “a last chance for union” between Egypt and Syria.

7 Grainger 1997, 31–32; Ehling 2008, 77–80, 92–95, 213–215, 217–228, 230–234.

8 Grainger 1997, 32–33; Ehling 2008, 46–8, 78–80, 92, 95, 97, 217–228, 234–239.

9 Grainger, 1997, 47; Hölbl 2000, 206–207; Ehling 2007 24, 26, 51, 213, 220–221, 230, 239–240, 246; Lightman 2008, 87 (s. v.).

10 For the events in Egypt, see Hölbl 2000, 205–7; see previous note for further references.

11 Just. 39.3.3: *Sed Cleopatra non tam a viro repudiata quam a matre divortio viri dimissa Cyziceno in Syria nubit, eique ne nudum uxoris nomen adferret, exercitum Cyprī sollicitatum velut dotalem ad maritum deducit*. Kleopatra, who was thus not so much repudiated by her husband as dismissed by her mother with the divorce, married Cyzicenus in Syria and, so as not to bring him merely the bare title of wife, she came to her husband with a dowry in the form of the garrison of Cyprus, which she inveigled into defecting.” (Engl. transl. by J. Yardley 1994)

Tryphaina, who was also the sister of the captive queen, she was killed sacrilegiously.¹² Of all Seleukid and Ptolemaic history covered by Trogus, this episode was selected by Justin as a(n im)moral story to both educate and entertain his readers.¹³

We cannot possibly know whether Antiochos VIII truly wished to spare Kleopatra IV (as Justin has it), and neither can we determine if Justin is alone in blaming Kleopatra Tryphaina for a murder that was perpetrated by her husband.¹⁴ It is still interesting to notice a peculiar detail of Justin's account: the soldiers had been ordered by Kleopatra Tryphaina – against Grypos' will – to murder Kleopatra IV even though she was in a sanctuary. We can thus infer either that the status of (some) Seleukid queens changed dramatically in the last century of the dynasty's history, or that Kleopatra Tryphaina had been given troops by her father,¹⁵ over which she retained some measure of authority and command. At second glance, the two scenarios do not necessarily contradict each other. In 110/9, Kyzikenos retook Antioch, simultaneously taking Kleopatra Tryphaina prisoner, and in turn had her killed in revenge.¹⁶

III. A PAWN IN THE 'WAR OF SCEPTERS': SELENE'S MARRIAGE WITH ANTIOCHOS GRYPOS

We have thus far only encountered Kleopatra Selene as a young Ptolemaic queen, perhaps married against her will but certainly a mother of two children. When Kleopatra III separated from Ptolemy IX Lathyros in the autumn of 107, Kleopatra Selene was "left behind" in Alexandria, virtually a divorcee, as Justin says: "In Egypt, Kleopatra [III] was exasperated with sharing the throne with her son Ptolemy and incited the people against him. She also took his wife Selene from him – an act all the more cruel because Ptolemy had already had two children by her – and forced him into exile, summoning her younger son Alexander and making him king in his brother's place".¹⁷ We do not know whether it was Kleopatra III who chose to marry Selene to her younger son and protégé, Alexander. Chris Bennett argues that this was the case, and accordingly that her two children that Justin attributed to Ptolemy IX Lathyros were to be split between him and his brother, Ptolemy X Alexander. According to Bennett,¹⁸ Berenike III (generally held to be the daughter of Lathyros and Kleopatra IV)¹⁹ was actually the daughter of Lathyros with

12 For a more thorough analysis of this incident, see Bartlett in this volume; Ager ca. 2016a.

13 Just. 39.3.4–11.

14 So Ager forthcoming.

15 We know that this was the case from Just. 39.2.3: [*Ptolemy VIII*] *Mittit igitur ingentia auxilia et filiam Tryphaenam Grypo nupturam* ...

16 Just. 39.3.12; Bartlett in this volume; Ager forthcoming.

17 Just. 39.4.1: *At in Aegypto Cleopatra cum gravaretur socio regni, filio Ptolomeo, populum in eum incitat, abductaque ei Selene uxore eo indignius, quod ex Selene iam duos filios habebat, exulare cogit, arcessito minore filio Alexandro et rege in locum fratris constituto*. (Engl. transl. by J. Yardley 1994). See also Hölbl 2000, 207.

18 Bennett 1997, 39, 55 and, for a more convenient reference, Bennett 2001/14, s. v. 'Selene' n. 13.

19 See, for instance, Ogden 1999, 93 (stemma). She is also counted by other authors as Kleopatra

Kleopatra Selene; Ptolemy XI Alexander II (generally believed to be the son of Ptolemy X Alexander I and an unknown woman) is regarded as her son from Ptolemy X Alexander I.²⁰

After 107 the conflict that is generally known as the ‘War of Scepters’ followed. Antiochos IX Kyzikenos and Ptolemy Lathyros fought against Kleopatra III, her son Ptolemy X Alexander I and Antiochos VIII Grypos. The war was waged in Syria and Phoenicia, but also affected Judaia, which was at the time ruled by Alexander Jannaios, who himself was attempting to take over coastal cities such as Gaza and Ptolemais.²¹

In 108, Ptolemy Lathyros, who according to Justin had been quite in love with his former wife, found the means to send 6000 troops to Kleopatra IV’s new husband, Antiochos IX. This intervention in Samaria against Aristoboulos, the son of John Hyrkanos, occurred against the will of Lathyros’ mother, “who all but drove him from the kingdom when she heard of it”.²² Regardless of whether we give any credence to the sentimental explanation for Lathyros’ action, he was probably seeking allies in the future conflict with his own mother, Kleopatra III.

The War of Scepters reached its climax in 103–101, when Ptolemy IX Lathyros landed in Palestine to support Ptolemais against Alexander Jannaios. When the citizens of Ptolemais changed their allegiance and closed their gates to Lathyros, he decided to lift the siege of Gaza and make it his principal base of operations. The war continued to rage with Kleopatra III campaigning in Palestine as an ally to Jannaios. Ptolemy Lathyros, in turn, supported Antiochos IX Kyzikenos and launched a direct attack on Egypt, but was repulsed by Ptolemy X Alexander. The Egyptian army conquered Ptolemais and marched on to Damascus, although we do not know whether Ptolemy X ever reached the Syrian city.²³ This is the context in which most modern authors²⁴ place the marriage between Kleopatra Selene and Antiochos VIII Grypos: she is believed to have been sent to him by her mother in 103/2, when the *entente* between Ptolemy IX and Antiochos IX was becoming dangerous. Edwyn Bevan comments on the situation:

Accordingly, she helped Grypos in a substantial way, supplying him with troops, which his depleted treasury could no longer procure. She also sent Selene, whom she had compelled Soter, nearly 20 years before, to marry, but whom he seems on withdrawal from Egypt to have

V Berenice III.

20 See, for instance, Ogden 1999, 93 (stemma).

21 See Van’t Dack 1989, *passim* for a very thorough dossier of this conflict (with a focus on the climax of the conflict, between 103 and 101 BC), including a number of papyri and even some hieroglyphic inscriptions. For a more concise (though more recent) narrative, see Ehling 2008, 223–230; Grainger 2010, 387–402.

22 Jos. *AJ* 13.10.2 (278); Bellinger 1949, 69–70; Cohen 1989, 16–18; Hölbl 2000, 208–209; Ehling, 2008, 226; Grainger 2010, 390–391.

23 A papyrus (*P.Heid. dem.* 142B + 781 + unnumbered fragment) re-published by Clarysse and Winnicki 1989, 69–75 (cf. also Cohen 1989, 124) reveals that he “left for Damascus”.

24 Bellinger 1949, 71; Cohen 1989, 17 (103 BC); Whitehorne 1994, 166 (103 BC); Ogden 1999, 153 (102 BC); Burgess 2000, 19; Hölbl 2000, 209; Bennett 2001/14 (103 BC); Ehling 2008, 228 (104 BC); Houghton, Lorber and Hoover, 2008/1, 484 (102 BC).

left behind. These developments must have taken place before 102–101, the year in which Kleopatra falls from power.²⁵

The only source for this is Justin who says something that differs slightly from what modern authors purport:

Terrified by this ruthlessness on his mother's part, Alexander likewise abandoned her, preferring a secure and stable life to a throne fraught with danger. Kleopatra was now afraid that her elder son, Ptolemy, might receive assistance from Cyzicenus to recover Egypt, she therefore sent considerable help to Grypos, along with Selene to be his wife, and thus married her to the enemy of her former husband. She also sent legates who succeeded in recalling her son Alexander to the kingdom, but she was caught plotting against his life and executed by him, surrendering her last breath not to fate but to parricide.²⁶

“Terrified” by what he had seen at home (his mother driving away his brother Lathyros who later turned against him), Ptolemy X Alexander deserted Kleopatra III only after he supported her in the War of Scepters.²⁷ At this point, Kleopatra III sent Selene as a bride bearing an army and supplies to Antiochos VIII. Later, she managed to recall her ‘prodigal son’, who eventually killed her in 101 so that he might rule alone. At any rate, Selene was married to Grypos only *after* the desertion of Alexander.

It is indeed tempting to think that the marriage took place during the war, when, for instance, Lathyros attempted to take Egypt from Kleopatra III. However, Lathyros was already a common enemy to both Antiochos VIII and Kleopatra III, since he supported Kyzikenos. Why, then, should we acknowledge that Grypos and Kleopatra III sealed their alliance in 103/2 with the wedding of Selene, when there is no evidence to show that Grypos effectively supported his mother-in-law at the time?

Chris Bennett has alternatively suggested that Ptolemy X Alexander married Selene after she had been left behind by Lathyros in 107.²⁸ If this is accepted, then Kleopatra III divorced Kleopatra Selene from Ptolemy X, when he had deserted her, offering Selene to the only available ally of equal stature who happened to be a bachelor at that time: Antiochos VIII Grypos. This must have been at some point before the end of the War of the Scepters and the return of Lathyros to Cyprus (spring 103/2 or 102/1) and of Kleopatra III to Egypt (September 102) – certainly well before the assassination of Kleopatra III by Ptolemy X (summer 102/101).

Looking back at the ‘Egyptian’ period in Kleopatra Selene's life (116–101), we can hardly ignore the pattern with which dynastic alliances are made and broken.

25 Bevan, 1902/2, 257;

26 Just. 39.4.3–5: *Igitur Alexander territus hac matris crudelitate et ipse eam relinquit, periculoso regno securam ac tutam vitam anteponens. Cleopatra vero timens, ne maior filius Ptolomeus a Cyziceno ad recuperandam Aegyptum auxiliis iuvaretur, ingentia Grypo auxilia et Selenen uxorem, nupturam hosti prioris mariti, mittit Alexandrumque filium per legatos in regnum revocat; cui cum occultatis insidiis exitium machinaretur, occupata ab eodem interficitur spiritumque non fato, sed parricidio dedit.* (Engl. transl. by J. Yardley 1994).

27 At any rate, he was with his army at Pelousion, in Feb. 102 (i.e. 103/2). See Cohen 1989, 124 (summarizing the documents presented and analyzed in Van't Dack 1989, *passim*).

28 Bennett 2001/14 s.v. Kleopatra Selene, n. 15.

When Kleopatra III was forced to accept as king her eldest son after the death of Euergetes, the result was that Kleopatra IV, whom she separated from Ptolemy IX against his will, deserted her and proceeded instead to marry Antiochos IX. Later, when Kleopatra III came into open conflict with Ptolemy IX, he lost his new wife. Selene was then given to the other brother Ptolemy X who remained loyal to the mother's cause. Thus the 'rebellious' king Ptolemy IX chose the 'rebellious' brother among the Seleukids, Antiochos IX, whom he had supported against his mother's will, even before the strife with her had escalated. It is noteworthy that Antiochos IX and Ptolemy IX may also have been united in their affection for Kleopatra IV.

When Kleopatra III herself became involved in the Seleukid War of Scepters (103–101), she found a natural ally in the legitimate king who was fighting against two 'rebellious' kings: Antiochos VIII Grypos. As such, she forged a dynastic alliance by offering him the daughter she had just divorced from Ptolemy X. While some of the stages of this plot still remain opaque, in the end it seems that Kleopatra Selene was a sort of prize for 'good behavior'. As a pawn in a complex game, she was transferred from being the wife of two successive kings in Alexandria to being the wife of the king(s) who ruled in Antioch.

IV. THE SELEUKID QUEEN: FROM THE DEATH OF ANTIOCHOS GRYPOS TO THE MARRIAGE WITH ANTIOCHOS KYZIKENOS

The situation in Syria around 101 BC was far from being settled, with two competing kings who were, to quote a famous expression by Josephus, "in the position of athletes whose strength is exhausted but who are ashamed to yield, and so continue to prolong the contest by periods of inactivity and rest."²⁹

It is impossible to draw a political map of Syria and Phoenicia for the year 102/1, but it may be helpful to consider which mints produced coins dated to this year: Grypos issued coinage at Antioch, Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos, Tarsos and Damascus,³⁰ while for his rival only the "Eros/Nike mint" (somewhere in southern Syria/Phoenicia) is attested to have been active, and this only for the years 102/1–101/0.³¹ For most cities of Phoenicia and Syria it is thus difficult to discern whether they still respected some sort of royal authority, or simply supported any one of the

29 Jos. *AJ* 13.12.2 (327): ἐκάτεροι γὰρ ταῦτόν τοις ἀθληταῖς ἔπασχον, οὐ τῇ δυνάμει μὲν ἀπηγορευκότες αἰσχυρόμενοι δὲ παραχωρῆσαι διετέλουν ἀργία καὶ ἀναπαύσει διαφέροντες τὸν ἀγῶνα. (Engl. transl. by R. Marcus 1957)

30 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: Antioch (504–506, nos. 2309.1–4–2316); Seleucia on the Calycadnus (491–492, no. 2279.1–4); Tarsus ("civic" workshop: 495, nos. 2288.1 f. – 2289.1–3); Damascus (511, no. 2325.3–8).

31 "Eros/Nike mint" – Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008/1, 542–544, no. 2388.5, but "the reading of the date is very doubtful". There are some other coins from this mint, "probably undated": no. 2388.6–9. – Of course, not all mints were constantly issuing, and not every city hosted an operating mint, so that our picture is incomplete. The most illustrious case being that of Apameia, the great military base for cavalry. And many cities had become more or less free, such as Tyre, Sidon, Seleukeia-in-Pieria, Gaza (?), Ascalon, Tripolis (at some point between 105–95), or "sacred and inviolable".

two competing kings. Some cities in the southern Levant seemed to have leaned towards Kyzikenos, as can be implied from their position in the War of Scepters. This may also have been because they were immediately threatened by Alexander Jannaïos; Kyzikenos and his ally, for their part, happened to be more active in this area than Grypos. Other cities were falling under the authority of “tyrants” or warlords of some sort, but we cannot tell when this occurred and if they were in collaboration with any of the competing kings.

With the general picture thus being set, we cannot know if Kleopatra Selene enjoyed her life as the wife of Antiochos VIII Grypos during his last reign at Antioch. No offspring are attested from the couple, who were by this point both in their forties, whereas Kleopatra Tryphaina had previously given birth to five sons and possibly one daughter during roughly a decade of marriage to Grypos. At any rate, Antiochos VIII Grypos was killed by Herakleon of Beroia no later than 97/96.³² They were thus married for at least five years (102/1–97/6).

After the murder of her Seleukid husband, Kleopatra Selene may have held out for some time in Antioch, but given the pressures surrounding her, it is generally believed that she “gave herself to him (sc. to Antiochos Kyzikenos) in 95 in an ‘auto-ecdomis’”³³. To some scholars, namely Bouché-Leclercq, it may well be that

Cléopâtre-Séléné, qui avait peut-être des raisons de se défier d’eux (sc. – *the children of Antiochos VIII with Kleopatra Tryphaina*), les avait quittés pour épouser précisément cet ennemi, le Cyzicène. Elle continuait ses pérégrinations matrimoniales, qui ne devait pas s’arrêter là.³⁴

Leaving aside this rather sarcastic verdict on the marital habits of Kleopatra Selene, the consideration raises one pivotal question: what happened to the children of Grypos when Selene became the wife of Kyzikenos? Herakleon is similarly an impenetrable figure who failed to usurp the throne of Antiochos VIII according to Poseidonius (Athenaios), but eventually killed the king, if we believe Trogus and Josephus.³⁵ Two further pieces of evidence, fragments of Strabo and Josephus, help us complete the picture by attesting that a certain Dionysios, the son of Herakleon, ruled as a tyrant over the cities of Bambyke, Beroia and Herakleia of Antioch.³⁶ In the view of John Grainger:

32 Jos. AJ 13.13.4 (365); Trog. Prol. 39 (*Ut in Syria Heracleo post mortem regis occupavit imperium*); Posidonius 34 (FHG 264 = FGrH 87 F24) = Athen. 4.153 b-c; Euseb. 1.259 ed. Schoene (who says that Grypos died in 97/6); Kuhn 1891, 24; Bellinger 1949, 72; Savalli-Lestrade 1998, 88 (no. 91); Ehling 2008, 231; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008/1, 484.

33 Ogden 1999, 156.

34 Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 416.

35 See above, n. 32.

36 Strab. 16.2.7 (750): πρὸς ἔω δ’ ὁ Εὐφράτης ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ Βαμβύκη καὶ ἡ Βέρουα καὶ ἡ Ἡράκλεια τῇ Ἀντιοχείᾳ, πολίχνη τυραννοῦμένα ποτε ὑπὸ Διονυσίου τοῦ Ἡρακλέωνος. – “To the east of Antiocheia are the Euphrates, as also Bambyke and Beroea and Heracleia, small town once ruled by the tyrant Dionysius, the son of Herakleon” (Engl. transl. adapted from H. L. Jones 1930). For a short commentary on this passage, see Biffi 2002, 182–3; Cohen 2006, 154 (Beroia), 171–2 (Herakleia) and 172–8 (Hierapolis-Bambyke).

Herakleon of Beroia [...] then claimed the kingship for himself. Herakleon is said to have been a martinet, so it is scarcely surprising that his claim was unsuccessful. Instead he withdrew to his home city and established it as a separate principality which included Hierapolis and a place called Herakleia whose location is not known.³⁷

We must note that Antiochos VIII had had the upper hand in the war against his stepbrother Antiochos IX Kyzikenos, because he eventually held most of the important cities (Antioch, Tarsos, Damascus), while the others became more or less autonomous. Surely a general like Herakleon, martinet or not,³⁸ must have been involved somehow. While scholars such as Bevan regard Herakleon as a luminous figure determined to renew Seleukid martial vigour, others, such as John Whitehorne, regard him as a boring man from whom Selene fled to Kyzikenos.³⁹

At any rate, there is no evidence that Herakleon ever reached Antioch,⁴⁰ and we do not know where and how he came to assassinate Antiochos VIII. Furthermore, it remains uncertain if Kyzikenos 'took' Kleopatra Selene and Antioch by force or if it was her decision to surrender herself along with the city.⁴¹ It is probably safe to say that both parties had something to gain from each other: Selene must have had the allegiance of at least some of the officials of Grypos, and she possibly even held control over the city of Antioch along with its garrison. In addition to this domestic influence, she offered a potentially powerful diplomatic channel to the court of Ptolemy X Alexander. Yet she had no son by the deceased king, which could have qualified her as a queen regent. Kyzikenos, in turn, was probably unmarried at the time.⁴² In addition, he had an army with him and could thus offer the support she needed to rule the city of Antioch and reap all the other immediate benefits that accrued to a queen. Both clearly stood to gain from their marriage.

37 Grainger 1990, 172–3. Against the *communis opinio*, Grainger goes on to connect the principality (perhaps) established by Herakleon of Beroia and whom Strabo tells us it was ruled by the tyrant Dionysios, the son of Herakleon, with Strato, whom Josephus (13.14.3) shows us as successfully defending Beroia with the help of Azizos and the Parthian satrap, Mithridates, against the siege of Demetrios III Eukairos. The idea has its charms, but at the end of the day, it should be handled cautiously, because we can not know for sure, in the absence of further documentation, whether a ruler of Beroia, Dionysios, the son of Herakleon, is the son of the Herakleon of Beroia, who, as a high official, murdered Antiochos VIII, and whether Strato of Beroia was related to them. It is at least feasible that Strato murdered Herakleon, took over Beroia and was ousted by Dionysios.

38 Of this Herakleon we only know from Poseidon. 34 (*FHG* 264 = *FGrH* 87 F24) = Athen. 4.153 b-c that he had his troops eating in an orderly silence and carrying arms; note that Athenaios focus was on banquets, table manners and eccentricities.

39 Whitehorne 1994, 167.

40 See the pertinent opinion of Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 415; also Bellinger 1949, 72, n. 60.

41 Yet another possibility is that she had not even been at Antioch at all, having fled the city soon after the news of the murder had reached her. But this is less likely, since there is no indication that Herakleon posed a threat to the city.

42 Differently Ogden 1999, 156 (followed by Ehling 2008, 228, 230): "It is unthinkable that he should have been without any wife at all during this time (i.e. between the death of Tryphaina and his marriage with Selene), and so we may as well give some credit to John Malalas' assertion (i.e. 208, 26 ed. Dindorf) that he married 'Brittane, daughter of Arsaces the Parthian', and assume that this marriage occupied at least some of the gap." However, Malalas is generally unreliable and it is difficult to see when and how this marriage might have taken place.

The children of Grypos and Tryphaina most certainly did not welcome this unexpected act of ‘conciliation’ in the troubled family. It appears that none of them happened to be in Antioch at the time of Grypos’ murder, or they would have managed to flee the city prior to the arrival of Kyzikenos, because they all survived to subsequently claim the diadem. The first to do so was Seleukos VI.⁴³ It would seem likely that Grypos established him with some authority somewhere in Kilikia, though we cannot ascertain whether he was acting as a temporary ambassador or a more permanent strategos or co-regent. Be this as it may, at a very early date in the 1st century BC he received an ambassador from Priene.⁴⁴ That this had happened in Kilikia may also be indicated by the importance of his later coinage in the area, which would thus appear to have been his main base of operations.⁴⁵ Regardless, Antiochos IX Kyzikenos immediately marched against the young Seleukos VI, but was defeated and died around 96/5 BC. The victorious son of Grypos was thus able to take Antioch.⁴⁶ If Selene had still been in the city, she would have only barely managed to escape towards the south.

V. THE RESILIENT QUEEN: SELENE’S MARRIAGE WITH HER STEPSON ANTIOCHOS EPIPHANES

It is difficult to assess the chronology of the ensuing events, because we know that in 95/4 Seleukos VI was still residing in Antioch, as proven by a recently published lead weight dated to this year (218 SE).⁴⁷ In roughly the same year, Josephus reports that Antiochos X Eusebes, the son of Antiochos IX Kyzikenos, proclaimed himself king at Arados.⁴⁸ It is quite possible that Kyzikenos had sent his wife and son to Arados before facing Seleukos VI in open battle, or at least they fled there

43 Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 416–8; Bellinger 1949, 72–4; Grainger 1997, 65–6; Hoover 2007, 288–9, 300 (proposing a revised chronology of his reign from 96/5 to 94/3); Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008, 551.

44 Hiller von Gaertringen 1906, 116–7, no. 121, l. 14 = McCabe, Ehrman and Elliott 1987, no. 105, l. 34: καὶ πρὸς Σέλευκον τὸν βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου τοῦ ἐγ βασιλέως Δημητρίου]. For this inscription bestowing honors on a citizen of Priene whose name is lost, see Ehling 2008, 70 (with n. 352) and esp. 234–5. Note that Seleukos did not yet bear the royal title himself.

45 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: Seleucia on the Calycadnus – 555–559, nos. 2403–2405 (1–25); Elaeusa – 559, no. 2406; Tarsus – 559–560, no. 2407; Antioch – 561–564, nos. 2413–2426.

46 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2007/1, 522, 551.

47 Weiss and Ehling 2006, 371–2.

48 Jos. *AJ* 13.13.4 (369): μετ’ οὐ πολὺ δὲ τοῦ Κυζικηνοῦ παῖς Ἀντίοχος, ὁ Εὐσεβῆς καλούμενος, παραγεννηθεὶς εἰς Ἄραδον καὶ περιθέμενος διάδημα πολέμει τῷ Σελεύκῳ, καὶ κρατήσας ἐξήλασεν αὐτὸν ἐκ πάσης τῆς Συρίας. “But not long afterward Antiochus, the son of Cyzicenus, who was called Eusebes (the Pious), came to Aradus, and having put on the diadem, waged war with Seleucus, and after defeating him, drove him out of the whole of Syria.” (Engl. transl. by R. Marcus 1957). Cf. Grainger 1997, 33–4; Ehling 2008, 235–9, 241–3, 250, 282; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover, 2008/1, 565–7.

after the disaster, trusting in the continued loyalty of the city. Seleukos VI was soon defeated and pushed back into Kilikia by ca. 94.

In the same chronological context, Appian reports that Seleukos VI was plotting against Eusebes, but that the latter was saved by a courtesan who fell in love with him “because of his beauty”.⁴⁹ We can suspect a more pragmatic motive in the surprising liaison that followed: Eusebes married his former stepmother Kleopatra Selene.

This borderline incestuous marriage is puzzling and somewhat disturbing, for one of the twisted side effects of the unusual relation is that Antiochos X Eusebes and his son from Selene, Antiochos XIII, were both the stepson and the son of the widow of Antiochos IX Kyzikenos.⁵⁰ It so happens that most modern scholars suspect that Antiochos X Eusebes and Antiochos XIII, father and son, might have been conflated by some ancient author.⁵¹ While the ultimate rationale behind their union is impossible to discern, it is nonetheless noteworthy that a similarly spectacular marriage had taken place when Seleukos I Nikator transferred his wife Stratonike to his son Antiochos I Soter. We cannot be sure whether or not the founder of the dynasty did so because his son was consumed by passion for his stepmother, clearly there were political implications, too. In any eventuality, Seleukos used this occasion to make it clear to everybody that the will of the king was legitimate and lawful, even if illegitimate and unlawful, not to say scandalous.⁵²

49 App. *Syr.* 69.366: καὶ αὐτὸν διεδέξατο Ἀντίοχος, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Κυζικηνοῦ· ὃν ἐπιβουλεύομενον ὑπὸ Σελεύκου τοῦ ἀνεψιοῦ οἱ μὲν Σύροι νομίζουσι περισωθῆναι δι’ εὐσέβειαν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Εὐσεβῇ παρωνόμασαν (ἐταίρα δ’ αὐτὸν ἔσωσεν, ἐρασθεῖσα τοῦ κάλλους), ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκοῦσιν ἐπὶ γέλῳ αὐτῷ ποιήσασθαι τὸ ὄνομα οἱ Σύροι· ἔγρημε γὰρ οὗτος ὁ Εὐσεβῆς Σελήνην, ἥ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ γεγάμητο τῷ Κυζικηνῷ καὶ τῷ Γρυπῷ θεῖῳ γενομένῳ. τοιγάρτοι αὐτὸν θεοῦ μετιόντος ἐξήλασε τῆς ἀρχῆς Τιγράνης. “Antiochus, the son of Kyzikenus, succeeded him. The Syrians think that he escaped a plot of his cousin Seleukus on account of his piety, for which reason they gave him the name of Antiochus Pius. He was really saved by a prostitute who fell in love with him for his beauty. I think the Syrians must have given him this title by way of a joke, for Pius married Selene, who had been the wife of his father Kyzikenus, and of his uncle, Grypus. For this reason the divine vengeance pursued him and he was expelled from his kingdom by Tigranes.” (Engl. transl. by H. White 1912)

50 Grainger 1997, 34–5; Ehling 253–8, 260–3, 271–2.

51 It has become a common practice, ever since Kuhn, to explain the incongruities between the sources (Josephus, Appian, Justin, Eusebios and so on seem to be, at best, contradictory) by the fact that they conflated Antiochos X with Antiochos XIII or Philip I with Philip II. For just one recent and influential example, see e.g. Hoover 2007, 291: “Although the account of Appian has often been preferred to that of Josephus in the history of Seleukid scholarship, it seems difficult to discount Bellinger’s suggestion that Appian has made an error and transposed events from the life of Antiochos XIII Asiaticus (who is also said to have fled from Tigranes) onto that of his father, Antiochos X. This sort of mistake is easily made, particularly when rulers all have the same name.”

52 Plut. *Dem.* 38; App. *Syr.* 59–62. See Almagor in this volume as well as Engels and Erickson in this volume for a discussion of the circumstances and the tradition of this marriage. From among their ample bibliography, see also, e.g., Bielman-Sánchez 2003, 46 (the reason must have been entirely political); Ogden 1999, 122–3 (the purpose was to avoid amphimetric strife); Vatin 1970, 86 (simple act of will of the ‘omnipotent’ sovereign).

We are probably safe in assuming that Eusebes and Selene had no need of further legitimizing royal ‘absolutism’ in the House of Seleukos. A closer look at their situation in essence reveals a prince who had many desires and even more needs: he wanted to become king, he was probably not very rich (most of his resources must have been left behind in Antioch), he needed an *éclat* to make himself noticed, he desperately needed a queen, and he happened to be in a land of strange traditions.⁵³ Kleopatra, in turn, was a widow in her forties, who could not easily marry a king from a different house, such as the Parthians, much less someone from the rival branch of the Seleukids. The illustrious precedent of Stratonike and Antiochos I may have helped overcome trepidation.

Kleopatra Selene has thus far appeared rather passive: others made decisions for her, and, when she did something on her own, it generally involved seeking refuge – at least, this is what our fragmentary sources suggest and what seems to be the scholarly consensus.⁵⁴ We, however, should acknowledge the possibility that in this instance, at the very least, Selene’s agency might well have been influential, if not decisive.

VI. THE SELEUKID WIDOW

In 93/2, Antiochos X was still ruling in Antioch, as indicated by a recently published lead weight.⁵⁵ What occurred afterwards is less clear, and there are several versions of his demise in ancient as well as in modern accounts which we should address in turn:

A. He died fighting against the Parthians (based on Josephus) for a queen Laodike of the Γαλικηγών (thus the best manuscript, the Codex Lugdunensis) or Γαλαδηνών (if we follow Dindorf’s edition) or Γαλίηνων or Γαλιενών or Γαλιλαίων (as one may read in other manuscripts) or even ‘Sameans’; the latter reading results from an emendation that has become common opinion,⁵⁶ whereby ‘Sameans’ (or Sameni or Samenians, depending on the choice of the modern scholars) tend to be located in Kommagene or somewhere else in north-eastern Syria.⁵⁷

53 It might be tempting to recall some episodes of the Jewish kings (assuming they reflect a tradition common to many peoples of the Levant): for instance, the usurper Absalom would consummate a sort of marriage with 10 of the concubines left behind in Jerusalem to “guard his house” by his father David, (2 *Kings* 16.20–23), or Solomon killing his stepbrother Adonai, because he asked for the hand of one of David’s concubines, Abishag (3 *Kings* 2.13–25). See also Almagor in this volume for similar Achaimenid practices and traditions.

54 Cf. Vatin 1970, 97.

55 Weiss and Ehling 2006, 370–1.

56 On account of Steph. Byz. 553.3: <Σαμηνοί,> νομάδων Ἀραβίων ἔθνος. See below, nn. 57–62 for references.

57 Jos. *AJ* 13.13 (370–1): τούτοις δὲ τοῖς δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖς καρτερώς ἀνθιστάμενος Ἀντίοχος ταχέως ἀπέθανεν· Λαοδίκη γὰρ ἐλθὼν σύμμαχος τῇ τῶν Σαμηνῶν βασιλίσσῃ Πάρθους πολεμοῦσιν μαχόμενος ἀνδρείως ἔπεσεν. τὴν δὲ Συρίαν οἱ δύο κατεῖχον ἀδελφοὶ Δημήτριος καὶ Φίλιππος, καθὼς ἐν ἄλλοις δεδήλωται. “These two brothers were courageously opposed by Antiochus, but he soon died; for he went to the aid of Laodice, queen of the

B. He fled to the Parthians (Eusebius, Hieronymus), later to be released by them. He was a candidate for Berenike's hand in 58 BC, but died from illness (Eusebius).⁵⁸

C. He was expelled from Syria by Tigranes (Appian).⁵⁹

D. The dynasty ended as a result of internal wars, which allowed Tigranes to become master of Syria (Trogus, Justin), but after his defeat, "the son of Kyzikenos", i. e. Antiochos X, was appointed king of Syria by Lucullus (Justin).⁶⁰

Most modern scholars have followed Josephus, with some variations and precautions. Such is the choice of Bellinger, Grainger, and Ehling while Hoover has recently suggested that we should date the death of Antiochos X to 89/8 BC.⁶¹

Samenians, who was waging war with the Parthians, and fell fighting bravely" (Engl. transl. by R. Marcus 1957)

58 Porphyry/Eusebios, 261–2 ed. Schoene: "Then two others began dueling for the kingdom: Philippus, the brother of Seleucus and son of Antiochus Grypus, and Antiochus, the son of Antiochus Cyzicenus. Beginning in the third year of the 171st Olympiad [94 BC], they fought against each other for control of Syria with select armies, each controlling part of the country. Antiochus was defeated and fled to the Parthians. Later he surrendered to Pompey, hoping to get Syria back. But Pompey, who had received a gift of money from the inhabitants of Antioch, did nothing for Antiochus and allowed the city to be autonomous. Then the inhabitants of Alexandria sent Menelaus and Lampon and Callimander to ask Antiochus to come and rule in Egypt together with the daughters of Ptolemy, after Ptolemy Dionysus had been driven out of Alexandria. But Antiochus fell ill, and died". (Engl. transl. from the Armenian edition of Aucher (1818) by R. Bedrosian http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_chronicon_02_text.htm)

59 App. Syr. 8.48 (247–248): καὶ βασιλεὺς Ἀρμενίας Τιγράνης ὁ Τιγράνου, ἔθνη πολλὰ τῶν περιόρων, ἰδίους δυνάσταις χρώμενα, ἐλὼν, βασιλεὺς ἀπὸ τοῦδε βασιλέων ἡγεῖτο εἶναι καὶ τοῖς Σελευκίδαις ἐπεστράτευεν, οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν ὑπακούειν. οὐχ ὑποστάντος δ' αὐτὸν Ἀντιόχου τοῦ Εὐσεβοῦς, ὁ Τιγράνης ἤρχε Συρίας τῆς μετ' Εὐφράτην, ὅσα γένη Σύρων μέχρις Αἰγύπτου. "Tigranes, the son of Tigranes, king of Armenia, who had subdued many of the neighbouring nations which had kings of their own, and from these exploits had acquired the title of King of Kings, attacked the Seleukidae because they would not acknowledge his supremacy. Antiochus Pius was not able to withstand him, and Tigranes conquered all the Syrian peoples this side of the Euphrates as far as Egypt". And Syr. 11.69 (366): ἐγῆμε γάρ οὗτος ὁ Εὐσεβὴς Σελήνην, ἣ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ γεγάμητο τῷ Κυζικηνῷ καὶ τῷ Γρυπῷ θεῖῳ γενομένῳ. τοιγάρτοι αὐτὸν θεοῦ μετιόντος ἐξέηλασε τῆς ἀρχῆς Τιγράνης. "I think the Syrians must have given him this title by way of a joke, for Pius married Selene, who had been the wife of his father Kyzikenus, and of his uncle, Grypus. For this reason the divine vengeance pursued him and he was expelled from his kingdom by Tigranes" (Engl. transl. by H. White 1912). The French translation of Pierre Goukowsky (in his bilingual ed., 2007) is more accurate, for Goukowsky renders οὐχ ὑποστάντος δ' αὐτὸν Ἀντιόχου τοῦ Εὐσεβοῦς with "Antiochos le Pieux ne lui ayant opposé aucune résistance".

60 Trog. Prol. 40: *Quadragesimo uolumine continentur haec. Ut mortuo Grypo rege Cyzicenus cum filiis eius bello congressus interii, hi deinde a filio Cyziceni Eusebe <extincti sunt: et ut repetito domestico bello> extinctaque regum Antiochorum domo Tigranes Armenius Syriam occupauit, quo mox uicto Romani abstulere eam.* Cf. Just. 40.1.1: *Mutuis fratrum odiis et mox filiis inimicitiis parentum succedentibus cum inexpiabili bello et reges et regnum Syriae consumptum esset, ad externa populus auxilia concurrit peregrinosque reges sibi circumspicere coepit*; Just. 40.2.2: *Igitur Tigrae a Lucullo victo rex Syriae Antiochus, Cyziceni filius, ab eodem Lucullo appellatur.*

61 Bellinger 1949, 75 (and n. 73); Downey 1961, 134 (and n. 73) refers to Bellinger, without

Others, such as Bevan, mix the narratives of Appian and Trogus/Justin.⁶² Adolf Kuhn somehow leaned towards Appian's account, but ultimately only concluded that Antiochos X was defeated in 96/5 by his cousins, Philip I and Demetrius III. He also discussed the older view which read *Καλινικηνών* instead of *Γαλικηνών* and thus identified Laodike as the queen of Kommagene, a daughter of Antiochos VIII Grypos.⁶³ Yet he rejected this by identifying Kallinikon not with Samosata, but with modern Ar-Raqqah (now of infamous celebrity), since it seemed implausible to him that Antiochos X would have hastened to support the daughter of Antiochos VIII Grypos.⁶⁴

As a result, it remains very uncertain whether or not Antiochos X outlived the year 92 BC. Be this as it may, some scholars believe that, for a brief moment, Selene was able to establish at Antioch a regency in her own right or ruled jointly along with an infant son before being ousted by Demetrios III.⁶⁵

The view that Selene was regent in Antioch for her son around 90 BC has been based on an undated royal bronze coin from the collection of Henri Seyrig.⁶⁶ This specimen has Kleopatra Selene on its obverse and a young Antiochos XIII, though the latter is not an infant. The year 92/1 also saw the issue of the first municipal coinage ever minted in Antioch that we know of:⁶⁷ a small bronze denomination showing the laureate head of Zeus on the obverse and a seated Zeus holding a Nike and a scepter on the reverse;⁶⁸ an even smaller denomination depicting the veiled bust of Tyche on the obverse and a tripod on the reverse; both types bear the legend *ANTIOXEΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ* and the date *ΑΚΣ* (221 SE = 92/1

committing himself. Grainger 1997, p. 653, s. v. Laodike: "Laodike, queen of the Sameni, in whose service Antiochos X Eusebes is said to have died." See also Ehling 2008, 241–2. He somehow misreads Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 420–1, when attempting to reconcile him with Kuhn (as below), arguing that "bei Laodike könnte es sich um eine Tochter des Antiochos IX und Schwester des Antiochos X handeln, was vielleicht erklären würde, warum Antiochos X ihr zu Hilfe kam (siehe Familienstammtafel)." Bouche-Leclercq does not consider sentimental family matters, rather stating that "Antiochos X se porta aux secours de Laodice, moins assurément pour défendre une fille de Grypos, une soeur de ses concurrents, que pour arrêter les Parthes à distance de sa propre frontière". It is Kuhn who raises this issue, not the French scholar. Nevertheless, the solution given by Ehling is an elegant one. Hoover 2007, 295, also n. 82: "The suggestion that the Samenians were really the inhabitants of Samosata in Commagene [...] is highly improbable in light of Steph. Byz., s. v. *Σαμηνοί* who clearly identifies them as Arabs"; the textual problem is not discussed.

62 Bevan 1902, 263: "in 83 the Armenian armies overflowed Syria. The men who called themselves kings – Philip, the son of Grypos, and Antiochos Eusebes the son of Cyzicenus – are no more heard of" (and n. 1, with the exposition of three main opinions from the sources, and appointing Laodike queen of the Sameni).

63 Bouché-Leclercq 1914, 605, with reference to von Gutschmid.

64 Kuhn 1891, 36 (and n. 3, with the discussion of Kallinikon, but avoiding judgment on the whereabouts of Laodike. On Kallinikon/Ar-Raqqah, see Coşkun ca. 2016, n. 113).

65 Grainger 1997, 44; Ehling 2008, 22–4, 234, 239–47.

66 Bellinger 1952, 53–5; cf. Bellinger 1949, 75, n. 73; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2007/1, 615–6, no. 2485 (who would rather assign this coin to a mint of Damascus, around 83/2 BC, between the reigns of Antiochos XII and Aretas) and 2007/2, pl. 94, no. 2485.

67 For this bronze series, see Butcher 2004, 307–12.

68 Hoover 2009, 290, no. 1370.

BC).⁶⁹ The civic coins were minted until 70/69 BC (with interruptions in 83/2, 73/2–71/0 BC). However, this municipal coinage does not necessarily reveal the status of city: after all, the title of metropolis was claimed, but this did not give it sacred rank or autonomy. The coins are dated according to the Seleukid Era, whereas a municipal era was introduced only under Pompey. Moreover, the pre-Roman city did not mint silver coins, which continued to be a royal privilege. This is obvious from the silver issues of Demetrios III and Philip I struck in Antioch as well as the lack of royal bronze types under their rule.

Regarding the coin bearing the portraits depicting Selene and a son, Bellinger had his doubts whether it was really struck in Antioch in 93/2 BC. He also proposed that it was minted at a later time, likely in Kilikia, because the king displayed on the obverse appeared too mature for the boy Antiochos XIII, even if somewhat idealized.⁷⁰ Ehling, in turn, noted that the legend on the reverse of that bronze coin did not include the royal epithet that Antiochos XIII assumed when he minted his own silver coinage in Antioch.⁷¹ In fact, on the coins that depict him as a teenager next to his mother, we find the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΣΕΛΗΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ;⁷² the only surviving tetradrachm possibly struck in his name reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ.⁷³ We can also add a market weight of unknown provenance (Antioch?) to these, bearing the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ. Kleopatra Selene must therefore have had two children, both named Antiochos, as Ehling puts it:

In Antiochos Philometor möchte ich diesen älteren Bruder des Antiochos XIII sehen [...] Demnach ist Antiochos Philometor nicht mit Antiochos XIII gleichzusetzen, sondern vielmehr ein neuer Seleukidenkönig.⁷⁴

Obviously, there must have been two different sons with the same name, differentiated by their epithets – certainly not an uncommon onomastic pattern for a queen born and raised in the house of Ptolemy. One is described as loving his mother, and the other as loving his brother. The idea that Kleopatra Selene might have had two sons both named Antiochos (or that the younger son had a different name, but exchanged it for the more prestigious dynastic name when his elder brother died) had already been accepted by Bouché-Leclercq.⁷⁵ A key to resolving this riddle can be found in a speech held by Cicero against Verres in 70 BC:

For you know that the kings of Syria, the boyish sons of King Antiochos, have lately been at Rome. And they came not on account of the kingdom of Syria; for that they had obtained

69 Hoover 2009, 291, no. 1374.

70 Bellinger 1952, 53–5.

71 The coin known to Bellinger 1952 had an incomplete legend (the third line being cut off), but it could be restored in 2004 when Burgess published a new denomination (of a slightly different type, with a Nike on the reverse instead of a tripod), with a full three-lined title: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ.

72 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2007/1, 616, no. 2484–6 and 2007/2, pl. 94, no. 2484–6.

73 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2007/1, 619, no. 2487 and 2007/2, pl. 57, no. 2487.

74 Ehling 2008, 243.

75 Bouché-Leclercq 1914, 609.

possession of without dispute, as they had received it from their father and their ancestors; but they thought that the kingdom of Egypt belonged to them and to Selene their mother. When they, being hindered by the critical state of the republic at that time, were not able to obtain the discussion of the subject as they wished before the senate, they departed for Syria, their paternal kingdom. One of them – the one whose name is Antiochos – wished to make his journey through Sicily. And so, while Verres was praetor, he came to Syracuse.⁷⁶

This speech has been variously interpreted by modern authors. According to Bevan, the children of Selene (Antiochos and an unknown brother of his) spent two years (75–73 BC) in Rome, because they wanted to obtain the recognition of the Senate for the throne of Syria.⁷⁷ In contrast, Bouché-Leclercq, Bellinger, Grainger, Hoover, Ehling as well as Houghton, Lorber and Hoover argue that their main purpose was the throne of Egypt.⁷⁸ Giusto Traina, in turn, thinks that the two princes intended to obtain Rome's aid – or at least its diplomatic approval – against Tigranes.⁷⁹ Regardless of the purpose of their stay in Italy, Bevan and Grainger note that Antiochos and his brother did not show signs of impoverishment, although their kingdom had been plagued by internal war and threatened, if not outright invaded, by Tigranes of Armenia.

Cicero would probably disagree with most modern interpretations – but this is a matter that will be discussed elsewhere. As Heinz Heinen notes, Cicero at least presents sufficient evidence to deduce that the name of the brother of Antiochos was certainly not Antiochos.⁸⁰ If there was an Antiochos Philometor, son of and co-ruler

76 Cic. Verr. 2.4.61 (27): *Nam reges Syriae, regis Antiochi filios pueros, scitis Romae nuper fuisse; qui venerant non propter Syriae regnum, nam id sine controversia obtinebant ut a patre et a maioribus acceperant, sed regnum Aegypti ad se et ad Selenen, matrem suam, pertinere arbitrabantur. Ii posteaquam temporibus rei publicae exclusi per senatum agere quae voverant non potuerunt, in Syriam in regnum patrum profecti sunt. Eorum alter, qui Antiochus vocatur, iter per Siciliam facere voluit, itaque isto praetore venit Syracusas.* (Engl. transl. adapted from C.D. Yonge 1903)

77 Bevan 1902, 264, also n. 4: “The evidence of Cic. Verr. Act II iv 27 f., seems to me preferable to that of Justin xl 1, 3, that the son of Antiochus during the rule of Tigranes had ‘lain hid in a corner of Cilicia’. This is followed by Kuhn and Wilcken, but it appears irreconcilable, not only with the language of Cicero, but also with the figure which the young princes are able to make in Rome.”

78 Bouché-Leclercq 1913, 433–4; Bellinger 1949, 81; Grainger 1997, 35 (s.v. Antiochus XIII Eusebes Asiatikos); Hoover 2007, 297; Ehling 2008, 253–5; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008, 617;

79 Traina 2012, 82.

80 Heinen 2006, 4 (= 1968, 109): “l’argument des deux fils homonymes d’Antiochos III nous semble peu décisif. Surtout que Cicéron, parlant des deux fils d’Antiochos X, écrit: *Eorum alter qui Antiochus vocatur* ... Car l’orateur, qui devait bien connaître ces jeunes gens – ceux-ci avaient passé à peu près deux ans à Rome (75–73 av. J.C.) – voulant distinguer les deux frères, ne se serait sûrement pas exprimé de la sorte si ceux-ci avaient été des homonymes. Sans doute A. Bouché-Leclercq s’était déjà rendu compte de cette impasse, puisqu’il admet qu’on pourrait également supposer que ‘le cadet ait été ainsi appelé après la mort de son frère’. Mais cette hypothèse est suivie d’un point d’interrogation, qui nous semble justifié.” – Given the onomastic traditions of the Seleukid dynasty, it may probably have been Seleukos, but we cannot be entirely sure.

with Selene in Antioch around 90 BC, as Ehling believes, then it is obvious that he could not be the unnamed brother of Antiochos XIII from Cicero's speech.

Furthermore, the coin published by Bellinger in 1952, to which two more denominations have been added later (see *supra*), cannot be attributed to the mint of Antioch or to an unknown mint of Kilikia. Michael Burgess has advocated Ptolemais,⁸¹ in which case we would have to date them to shortly before the city fell to Tigranes (73/69 BC). With reference to style, paleography and the provenance of all three coins from the Syrian-Jordanian border area, Houghton, Lorber and Hoover have attributed them to the mint of Damascus, immediately after the reign of Antiochos XII (that is, around 84/3).⁸²

Since the coinage of Kleopatra Selene and Antiochos Philometor must originate from somewhere in central Levant (perhaps Damascus, less likely Ptolemais), the doubts raised by Weiss in 2007 appear to be justified, and the weight should be attributed to Antiochos VIII (Philometor) Grypos rather than following Ehling by attributing it to Antiochos Philometor.⁸³ Ehling's arguments can only be accommodated if we assume that:

- a) It was this Antiochos XIII Philometor who went to Rome along with his brother who at the time had a different name;
- b) That Philometor died at some later moment, which is somehow contrary to what Cicero says, for he says he was ruling over "a prosperous kingdom" in 73 and he does not say that the young Antiochos died in between 73 and c. 70, the moment when the *Verrinae* were written⁸⁴;
- c) His unnamed brother assumed the name *Antiochos* and took the epithet *Philadelphos*. While possible, all of these conditions make a rather complicated hypothesis that is not particularly attractive for want of further documentation.⁸⁵

We have reason to suspect that Selene and Eusebes had more children than the two explicitly mentioned by Cicero. Plutarch, in his *Life of Lucullus*, has his protagonist say:

[...] and over Armenia there sits enthroned Tigranes, King of Kings, with forces which enable him to cut the Parthians off Asia, transplant Greek cities into Media, sway Syria and Palestine, put to death the successors of Seleucus, and carry off their wives and daughters into captivity.⁸⁶

81 Burgess 2000, 18–25.

82 Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008/1, 615–6.

83 Weiss and Ehling 2007, 499, cf. *supra*.

84 Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.67 (30): *Rex Antiochus, qui Romae ante oculos omnium nostrum biennium fere comitatu regio atque ornatu fuisset, is cum amicus et socius populi Romani esset, amicissimo patre, avo, maioribus, antiquissimis et clarissimis regibus, opulentissimo et maximo regno, praeceps provincia populi Romani exturbatus est.*

85 See also the doubts of Muccioli 2013, 248–9.

86 Plut. *Luc.* 14.6.9–14.7.1 (quoting Lucullus): καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἀρμενίας κάθηται Τιγράνης, βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, ἔχων δύναμιν ἢ Πάρθους τε περικόπτει τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδας εἰς Μηδίαν ἀνακομίζει καὶ Συρίας κρατεῖ καὶ Παλαιστίνης καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ Σελεύκου βασιλεῖς ἀποκτινύνει, θυγατέρας δ' αὐτῶν ἄγει καὶ γυναῖκας ἀνασπάστους. (Engl transl. by B. Perrin 1914)

The context of this speech is the siege of Amisos prior to the battle of Kabyra in the winter of 72/1.⁸⁷ If what he says is taken as authentic or at least circumstantially accurate, then it follows that there were more Seleukids than those we already know from the sources: the male captives would have been executed, the females detained probably somewhere outside of Syria.⁸⁸

Who are the “successors of Seleucus” put to death by Tigranes? The likely candidates are Antiochos X (though uncertain) or Philip I. Hoover, however, argues that Philip I died around 75, thus before Tigranes entered Syria.⁸⁹ As far as the princesses mentioned by Lucullus are concerned, we have to admit that our fragmentary sources leave sufficient scope for several potential wives or daughters of Seleukos VI, Antiochos XI, Demetrios III, Philip I or Antiochos XII. At the very least, we know from Josephus that Selene was besieged in Ptolemais by Tigranes, while Strabo completes the account by adding that she was indeed captured and detained in Seleukeia-Zeugma before being executed.⁹⁰ It would be a plausible assumption that she was accompanied by at least one daughter she might have had either by Kyzikenos or Eusebes (or perhaps even Grypos?). Of course, this must be taken *cum grano salis*, for the rhetoric of Lucullus (or Plutarch) may be misleading.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Arriving at the end of our investigation, we have raised about as many new questions about Kleopatra Selene as we have answered. Yet I hope that we are now in a better position not only to date her five weddings, but also to understand the motivations behind these marriages: to Ptolemy IX Soter (before 116), Ptolemy X Alexander (116), Antiochos VIII Grypos (ca. 103 or 102), Antiochos IX Kyzikenos (97) and finally Antiochos X Epiphanes (94). I have further argued against the idea that we should welcome a new Seleukid king of her blood, Antiochos Philometor (besides Antiochos Philadelphos). Finally, I hypothesized that she might have also had daughters whose fates remain uncertain.

87 de Callatay 1997, 353–4.

88 This is consistent with what Strab. 16.2.3 (749) says about the last days of Kleopatra Selene: κατὰ τοῦτο δὲ Σελεύκεια ἴδρυται φρούριον τῆς Μεσοποταμίας προσηρισμένον ὑπὸ Πομπηίου τῷ Κομμαγενῶ, ἐν ᾧ τὴν Σελήνην ἐπικληθεῖσαν Κλεοπάτραν Τιγράνης ἀνείλε, καθεῖρξας χρόνον τινὰ ἡνίκα τῆς Συρίας ἐξέπεσεν. “Seleuceia, a fortress of Mesopotamia, which was included within the boundaries of Commagene by Pompey; and it was here that Tigranes slew Selene, surnamed Kleopatra, after imprisoning her for a time, when she had been banished from Syria.” (Engl. transl. by H.L. Jones 1930). See also Biffi 2002, 175–6; Ehling 2008, 255–6.

89 Hoover 2007, 298.

90 Jos. AJ 13.16.3 (420) on Tigranes: πολιορκοῦντι Πτολεμαΐδα. βασίλισσα γὰρ Σελήνη ἡ καὶ Κλεοπάτρα καλουμένη τῶν ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ κατέχειν, ἣ καὶ ἐνήγαγεν τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας ἀποκλείσαι Τιγράνῃ νῦν ἐτύγχανεν. “He was besieging Ptolemais. For Queen Selene, also called Kleopatra, was then ruling over Syria and she induced the inhabitants to shut their gates against Tigranes” (Engl. transl. by R. Marcus 1957); cf. Strab. 16.2.3 (749), quoted above, n. 88.

As for Selene, we have looked at the ‘Moon’ to clarify the most prominent stages of her public life, her ‘bright’ side. The desire to catch some glimpses of her ‘dark’ side, her private life or personal feelings, remains perhaps futile by nature but nonetheless enticing, as such things tend to remain hidden to the eyes of the historian. Notwithstanding this limitation imposed by the sources, I have tried to show that she developed from a mere pawn in a violent and highly dynamic game of dynastic power into an active player who made her own decisions quite effectively. Again, her feelings in all of these nuptial transformations remain opaque to us. But if some agency is conceded to her in these latter ‘transactions’, we find ourselves with some measure of insight into a personality that may not inspire deep sympathies or affection in modern eyes, but still elicits recognition of her resilience and recklessness.

VIII. APPENDIX: TRADITIONAL AND REVISED CHRONOLOGY OF THE LATER SELEUKID KINGS AND TIGRANES (ACCORDING TO HOOVER 2007, 300–301)

Whether or not one wants to agree with every suggestion by Hoover, his conspectus provides a very helpful guide through the troubled timeline of the later Seleukid rulers:

Table 1: Summary of Traditional and Proposed Chronologies for the Late Seleukids at Antioch

Reign	Textual Dates	Dated Coins/ Weights	Revised Dates
<i>Antiochus VIII (First)</i>	123/2 (Eus.) or 125/4 (Hieron.; Jos.)–113/12 (Eus.; Hieron.)	121/0–114/13	121/0–114/13
<i>Antiochus IX (First)</i>	112/111–111/10 (Eus.; Hieron.)	113/12	113/12
<i>Antiochus VIII (Second)</i>	111/10–97/6 (Eus.; Jos.)	113/12 and 111/10	113/12–111/10
<i>Antiochus IX (Second)</i>	97/6–96/5 (Eus.) or 95/4 (Hieron.)	110/09	110/09
<i>Antiochus VIII (Third)</i>	–	–	109/8–c. 97
<i>Antiochus IX (Third)</i>	–	–	97/6–96/5
<i>Seleucus VI</i>	96/5–95/4 (Eus.) or 94/3 (Hieron.)	95/4 [95/4 in Cilicia]	96/5–94/3
<i>Antiochus X (First)</i>	95/4–93/2 (Eus.; Hieron.), or 87/6 (Just.), or 85/4 (App.)	–	94/93
<i>Antiochus XI</i>	–	–	c. 93
<i>Antiochus X (Second)</i>	–	93/2	93/2–90/89
<i>Demetrius III</i>	–	[97/6–96/95 and 94/3–88/7 at Damascus]	88/7 [97/6–88/7 at Damascus]
<i>Philip I</i>	93/2–92/1 (Eus.; Hieron.)	–	88/7–c. 75
<i>[Antiochus XII at Damascus]</i>	–	[87/6–84/3]	[87/6–84/3]

Reign	Textual Dates	Dated Coins/ Weights	Revised Dates
<i>Tigranes II</i>	87/6–69/8 (Just.) or 83/2–69/8 (App.)	–	<i>c.</i> 74/3–69/8
<i>Antiochus XIII (First)</i>	69/8–65/4 (App.)	–	68/7
<i>Philip II</i>	–	–	67/6–66/5
<i>Antiochus XIII (Second)</i>	–	–	65/4

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Drawn by Alex McAuley



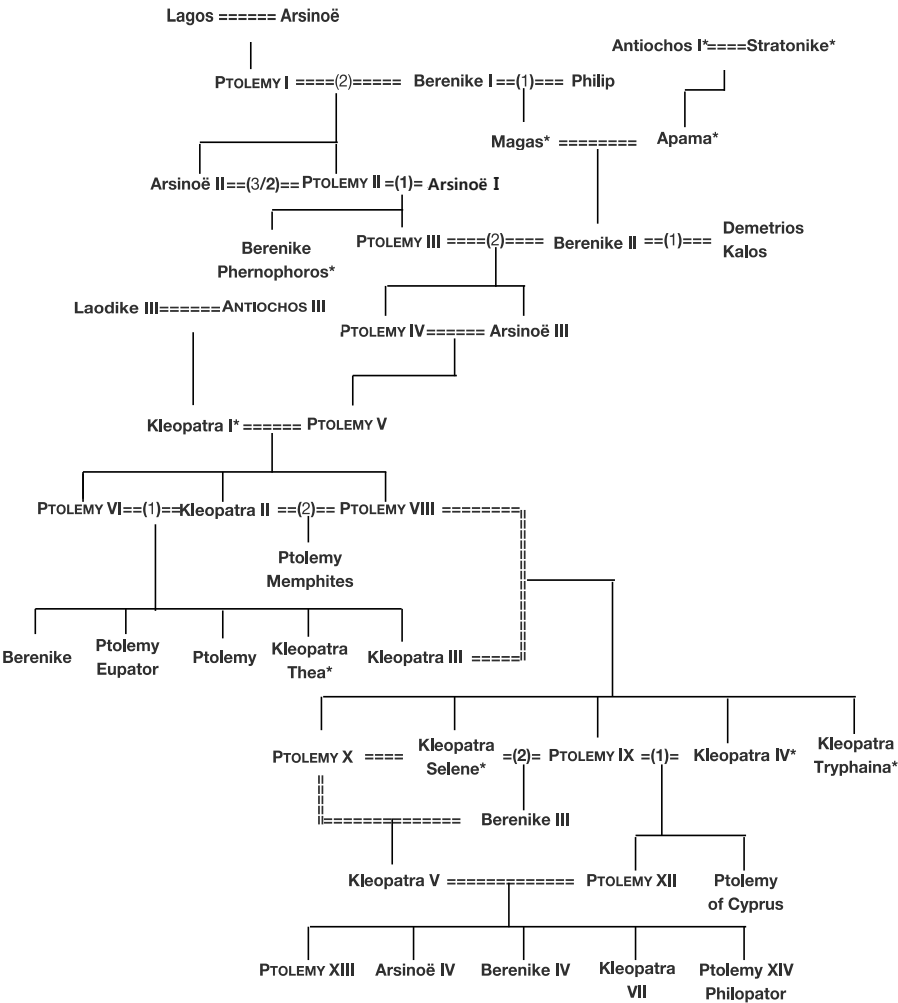
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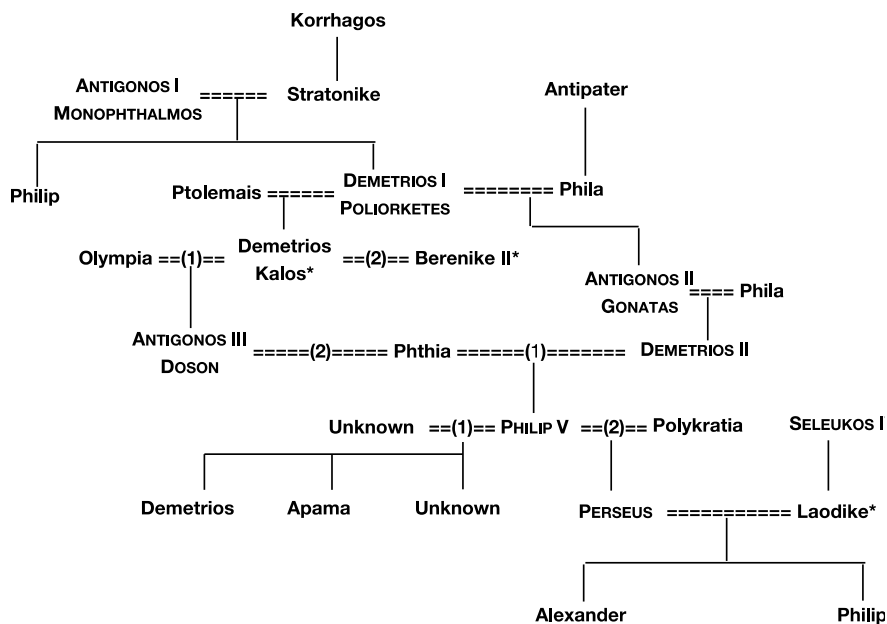
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Legend:
a====b: A married to B
==(X/X)==: marriage #X for the groom, marriage #X
for the bride

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**Legend:**

a====b: A married to B

==(X/X)==: marriage #X for the groom, marriage #X for the bride

(location): Reigning dynast therein

Name*: listed in other stemmata

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